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Wednesday, 11 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/273)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10am.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/273)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/273, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Annadif and by Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Annadif.

Mr. Annadif (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/273), covering the first quarter of 2018.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence of Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

As noted in the report, the first three months of 2018 were marked by the appointment on 30 December 2017 of a new Prime Minister, Mr. Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga. This period was also characterized by the strengthening of trust between the signatory parties of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, of which the Prime Minister's high-profile visit to the northern regions is a perfect illustration in that it concretized the gradual return of the authority of the State to those regions, particularly in Kidal.

Likewise, a degree of progress in the peace process deserves to be welcomed. This includes, among other things, the adoption by the Government on February 28 of laws establishing territorial communities in the regions of Ménaka and Taoudenni, and the signing on 22 March of a road map to operationalize the timeline of priority actions that was endorsed by the Agreement Monitoring Committee at its twenty-fourth session, held on January 15 and 16 in Bamako. I am convinced that the concretization of these various actions recorded in the road map, in particular the full operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal and Timbuktu, as well as ensuring the effective functioning of the interim authorities by endowing them with material and financial means confidence-building measures that could further support the Malian people in the implementation of the Agreement.

Workshops on the preregistration of combatants eligible for integration or the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, held successively in Kidal, Timbuktu, Ménaka and Gao during the last week of February, constitute real progress, including the convening of the high-level workshop on security sector reform, which allowed for a shared vision as an important lever for the security component of the Agreement.

In parallel with these initiatives, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its partners continue to strengthen the capacities of regional authorities in the north and the centre of the country at the logistical, technical and political levels, as the interim authorities represent an important link in meeting the needs of the population, in particular in terms of basic social services, the return of refugees and displaced persons, and support for the electoral process, pending their replacement by elected authorities.

This positive dynamic in the implementation of the Agreement should not, however, make us forget that this is an election year in which the presidential elections are scheduled for 29 July for the first round

and 12 August for the second, while the legislative elections are scheduled for November and December. In that perspective, and in accordance with its mandate of good offices and support for the electoral process, MINUSMA undertook inclusive contacts with the entire Malian political class and the signatory movements in order to call on them to engage in a consensual process, leading to peaceful and credible elections.

In that regard, on 1 and 2 March MINUSMA facilitated the holding of a workshop on the revision of the electoral law of 17 October 2016 with several innovations, taking into account most of the demands of the opposition and civil society and many of the recommendations from the 2013 election observation missions of the European Union, the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Economic Community of West African States. These include the introduction of a biometric electoral voting card, replacing the national identity card, and the assignment by the State of one monitor of the opposition and one of the majority to every polling station. At the same workshop, the Government agreed to conduct an independent audit of the electoral register, which should take place in April.

MINUSMA continues to undertake a further series of activities aimed at preventing post-election tensions and at supporting the revision of electoral lists so as to ensure that the entire process, as I have said, will be as consensual, inclusive and credible as possible.

The period covered by the report saw a deterioration of the security situation, particularly in the centre of the country, with sometimes quite serious human rights abuses, as pointed out by MINUSMA in its communiqué of 30 March. The same concerns were noted recently in the report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Mr. Suliman Baldo, during his visit from 12 to 16 March, and unfortunately remind us of the extent of the challenges in this domain.

The establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali and the Government's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration on 1 February are commendable positive steps. We also welcome the Government's adoption, on 7 March, of a new national policy on Mali's borders.

A draft law of national understanding is being considered. It will probably be submitted to the National Assembly at its April session. Despite reservations on this particular issue, it should be noted that it would be a significant step towards national reconciliation. The transfer of Mr. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud to the International Criminal Court on 31 March also proves that reconciliation does not necessarily mean impunity.

In order to support the Government plan intended to make the centre of the country more secure, MINUSMA and the United Nations country team have launched several initiatives to promote social cohesion and the restoration of State authority, economic recovery and the provision of basic social services, including quick-impact projects. It is important to note that a purely security-oriented approach is not and will not be sufficient and could even have the opposite effect.

In that connection, MINUSMA continues to provide constant support to the Specialized Judicial Unit against Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime. That collaboration has led, for the first time, to those accused as a result of investigations of the Unit being brought before the Court of Appeal in Bamako. The same cooperation has allowed the national policy and action plan on preventing and combating violent extremism and terrorism for 2018-2020 to be adopted.

In accordance with resolutions 2295 (2016) and 2364 (2017) and drawing on lessons from the recommendations of the Santos Cruz report, MINUSMA is undertaking an increasing number of major patrols, particularly in the centre of the region, to reassure the population, assess the human rights situation and interact with community leaders in some remote and hard-to-reach areas. That was the case for Operation Furaji from 15 to 27 January and Operation Foronto from 4 to 15 March.

Nonetheless, these achievements by MINUSMA have been tarnished by the number of victims, which has steadily increased in recent months, mainly as a result of landmines and improvised explosive devices, but also because of indirect targeting of shells and rockets, as was the case last week at the Aguelhok camp, which claimed the lives of two peacekeepers from Chad. We place great hope in the arrival of the recently deployed combat convoy companies, although they are not yet fully operational.

We recall the importance of giving priority to training and equipment for troops, including armoured vehicles. We currently lack approximately 100 armoured vehicles, which leaves us vulnerable. Troop- and police-contributing countries, whose efforts we

commend, are asked to do what they can to fill those gaps. We must also not forget the important shortfall in both combat and utility helicopters. There too, we place a great deal of hope in Canada's pledge to deploy six helicopters in the coming months, but that offer, as welcome as it is, still falls short of the number of helicopters we need.

During the period under review, we also had the pleasure of hosting, from 14 to 25 March, the independent MINUSMA strategic review team led by Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who engaged in several very constructive exchanges about the challenges being faced by the Mission.

We await with great interest the recommendations to be submitted shortly to the Secretary-General. We dare to hope that the recommendations will guide the Council's deliberations in the framework of the discussions on the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate and enable a better alignment between the mandate entrusted by the Security Council with the realities and constraints on the ground, as well as with the expectations of the people of Mali. These recommendations will also guide the ongoing considerations in drafting MINUSMA's strategic plan, as requested by resolution 2364 (2017).

In the meantime however, the Mission continues to work in close cooperation with the country team, in particular to respond to the needs of the Malian people, especially women and young people, through the tools available to us and their practical priorities. The task force on elections, the working group to support the interim authorities, as well as the coordination of activities in the Mopti region level are examples of this close cooperation. We also welcome the start of the work of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali on the sanctions regime. The Panel, which is another important tool in supporting the peace process, has already carried out two missions in Mali.

The Office of the Independent Observer is now almost operational. We also hope that its first report will help to attribute responsibilities and thereby accelerate the peace process.

The effective establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali is also eagerly awaited by the Malian people, in addition to the outstanding work that the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission continues to carry out. Those mechanisms complement the Agreement's monitoring architecture and provide new tools, in particular through the sanctions regime, which can strengthen the accountability and adherence of parties to the Agreement, while reminding them of their obligations.

In a context as complex as that of Mali, cooperation with other partners, first and foremost the Government of Mali, remains a priority for the United Nations. While continuing to support the Malian armed forces in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed in November 2017, MINUSMA is working closely with the National Council for Security Sector Reform on the concept of establishing reconstituted security and defence forces, which is one of prerequisites for sustainable security in Mali. The high-level workshop that was held in Bamako from 27 to 28 March is a perfect example of this. The workshop not only brought together all the key actors of the Agreement, but also allowed frank and open exchanges among Malians in order to arrive a shared vision on the future of their defence and security forces.

Furthermore, in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017) and thanks to the signing of the technical arrangement on 23 February in Brussels among the United Nations, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the European Union, MINUSMA has already sketched out the framework of its support to the joint G-5 Sahel Joint Force. With the deployment of a team to the headquarters of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force in Sévaré, the mechanisms for medical evacuations, engineering and logistical support are already operational. Of course, all this has been done while ensuring compliance with the human rights due diligence policy.

In the context of regional cooperation, we welcome the important work being undertaken by the Peacebuilding Fund through the disbursement initiative of $3 million to promote the security of local populations and social cohesion in Liptako-Gourma, which is a region straddling the borders of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, where a large number of terrorist elements are operating.

As the report before members underscores, 2018 is an election year. However, Malian actors should not lose sight of the fact that the implementation of the Agreement must remain a priority; it must not become a political football. We must endeavour to bring to completion both undertakings in a complementary

manner by relying on the fresh momentum provided by the new Prime Minister, which is necessary but not sufficient given the delays that have been noted. The international community must provide support and encouragement in this respect.

The Peace Agreement process is a complex one, and the Council must therefore call on the signatory parties to ensure that the road map signed on 22 March does not become a dead letter. It is time to move from pledges to action by respecting the deadlines that have been set.

Regarding the electoral process, all Malian political actors are unanimous in their belief that the elections need to be held on the dates set, with full transparency and credibility. The international community shares these same concerns. Just as the 2013 elections re-established constitutional order in Mali, those of 2018 must irreversibly anchor democracy in the country.

In terms of preparations, an agreement has been reached to review the current electoral law, which has led to a consensus-based draft that is currently before the National Assembly. An order for 8 million ballot cards is currently also being prepared. In line with its mandate, MINUSMA has begun to lend technical and logistical support where it is deployed and within resource constraints, including by transporting election materials and dispatching staff.

We have also begun to work to ensure secure elections and that any electoral disputes are properly handled. However, given the tight electoral schedule, concerns remain, including ensuring that the 8 million ballot cards are available and distributed in a timely manner, and that the voter list audit is carried out within the set deadline, thereby strengthening confidence.

The Council must call on all Malian politicians to respect the timeline and encourage them to approach the elections in a spirit of consensus, peace and credibility. Failing to do so would exacerbate the crisis, with the enemies of peace emerging as the winners. They are undeserving of such a gift.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Annadif for his very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skoog.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. The report covers the period from 5 September 2017 to 4 April 2018, during which time the Committee met twice in informal consultations and conducted additional work via the written silence procedure.

After the establishment of the Committee, preparatory work was undertaken by the Secretariat in terms of creating the Committee's website in all languages; preparing the budget of the Panel of Experts; screening candidates for the Panel; and preparing the Committee's guidelines.

On 29 January, the Committee adopted the guidelines for the conduct of its work, and on 1 February, the Panel of Experts started its work.

On 5 February, the Committee convened its first informal consultations, during which the four members of the Panel of Experts were introduced to the Committee and presented their work plan.

During the informal consultations held on 28 February, the Committee considered the first interim update of its Panel of Experts, submitted to the Committee in accordance with paragraph 11 of resolution 2374 (2017). The Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel, followed by an interactive discussion between the Committee members and the Coordinator.

Together with other members of the Committee, I conducted a visit to Bamako on 26 and 27 March. I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, as well as the Security Council Affairs Division, for having facilitated that mission. The visit provided us with an opportunity to obtain first-hand information from key counterparts in Mali and engage with all Malian parties on how the sanctions regime put in place by the resolution can support peace and stability, including through the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In accordance with the Committee guidelines, I will report, orally and in writing, to the Committee on the observations and the findings of the trip.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all Member States for their continued willingness to cooperate constructively with the Committee and its Panel of Experts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Skoog for his very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Annadif, for his most informative briefing and his exemplary commitment. On behalf of France, I wish to reiterate our full support to him and all his team. I wish also to thank the Permanent Representative of Sweden, Olof Skoog, for his briefing and for his work at the helm of the sanctions Committee. I wish also to warmly welcome the presence here of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, and to thank him for having travelled to New York to take part in our work.

I wish to begin my statement by hailing the memory of the three Blue Helmets who perished last week during attacks against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). France pays tribute to the memory of these warriors for peace. Their sacrifice serves as a reminder of how MINUSMA is evolving in a difficult environment and of the key role it plays in promoting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, and in protecting the Malian people from those who oppose it and in so doing resort to actions that include terrorist attacks and criminal acts. France, engaged alongside the United Nations peacekeeping Mission, is aware of this threat and itself has suffered therefrom, as two French soldiers perished on 21 February last.

Today's meeting is of particular importance with respect to follow-up to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. The members of the Security Council made a collective commitment, in their statement to the press of 24 January last, to seize the opportunity to take stock of the implementation by the parties of the commitments made in the framework of the priority actions timeline adopted in January. At that point, a decision was also taken that additional measures would be considered under the sanctions regime if the commitments taken were not met by the set deadlines.

We welcome the efforts made by the Government, since the most recent meeting of the Council on Mali (see S/PV.8163), to foster the necessary consensus on the electoral process and restore the Administration's presence in central Mali. The Prime Minister's visit to Kidal in particular marked a restoration of high-level political leadership and cooperation as concerns the implementation of the Peace Agreement, nearly four years after the last visit by a comparable level of authority to the region.

Unfortunately, it is clear that in the wake of the deadline set by the Malian parties themselves under the timetable of priority actions, a large part of the commitments made have not yet been implemented. The resulting delays are far from being inconsequential on the ground for a number of reasons. Given the lack of progress, all of the achievements to date and the very relevance of the Agreement itself could end up being called into question; the significant electoral deadlines scheduled for the coming months make it all the more necessary and urgent to move forward on various aspects of the Agreement, which is imperative to ensure the success of the elections to come; and there can be no lasting stability in the Sahel absent the full implementation of the Peace Agreement.

In terms of substance, it is still the same measures whose implementation by the Malian parties we are awaiting. It is particularly urgent that progress be achieved, specifically in the areas of decentralization and security. Specifically, I am thinking in terms of the operationalization of interim authorities, the establishment of territorial police and progress in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and that of security sector reform. France also encourages Malian authorities to pursue work dedicated to combating impunity. It calls on all parties to halt human rights violations.

We were pleased to note the adoption a few days ago of a new road map, at the Prime Minister of Mali's initiative, announcing the implementation of measures awaited for by Malian parties according to the revised schedule. We can only support that initiative and hope for its success, which includes the upcoming holding of regular meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Bamako. But let us be clear: the new road map, which is unfortunately not the first, cannot let us forget the fact that the commitments undertaken this past January failed once again to be respected, while the Malian people, the countries of the region and the entire international community has been waiting for their implementation for almost three years.

In that regard, the responsibility of the Council — pursuant to the very terms of the peace agreement — involves taking steps necessary to encourage the parties to honour the commitments

that they made within that framework. The adoption of resolution 2374 (2017), in September 2017, which established a sanctions regime concerning Mali, was a first step in that direction. Today, subsequent delays in the implementation of the agreement and the failure to realize commitments according to agreed deadlines are driving us to take additional measures. We no longer have the time to wait. In the coming weeks, together with its Council partners, France will undertake the task of identifying those obstructing the implementation of the peace agreement, through which their names will be determined. We intend to focus initially on a list of officials who are undermining the implementation of the agreement on the ground, in particular through their collusion with terrorist groups and trafficking activities. All Malian stakeholders must be aware that the Security Council takes their word as their bond with regard to upholding their commitments.

Despite the challenges it faces, MINUSMA remains today an essential instrument for ensuring the stability of Mali, in addition to the other security forces present on the ground. Its role in supporting the electoral process will be decisive in the holding of presidential elections in July and August. Fully aware of the difficult environment in which the Mission is deployed, France reiterates its call on all Member States to ensure that the Mission is provided with the capabilities and equipment commensurate with the mandate that the Council has conferred upon it. In our view, that is an absolutely crucial point, especially in terms of strengthening the safety of peacekeepers on the ground, which is the priority of all of us. For example, the installation of early-warning devices in all of the Mission's camps in the case of an indirect attack would undoubtedly allow us to save lives, as was tragically illustrated by the recent attacks on the Kidal and Aguelhok camps, which were only a few days apart. That is one of the areas in which we must act urgently together with the Secretariat so long as there are existing technical solutions that are moreover available to us in the short-term.

We believe that the strategic review currently being conducted by Ellen Margrethe Løj also affords us a valuable opportunity to improve the performance and outcomes of the Mission. We fully support that process, which will be advantageous for all of us. We will consider with interest the recommendations to be made by the Secretary-General on the work under way, in view of the upcoming renewal of the Mission's mandate. We especially hope that they will enable us to continue to move forward towards a better sequencing of the mandate's tasks so that MINUSMA can contribute as effectively as possible to the stabilization of Mali, including in the northern part of the country, while supporting the Malian armed forces in conjunction with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), Operation Barkhane and the engagement of the European Union. We will also take that opportunity to work towards achieving increased clarity with regard to the role and responsibilities of each element of the security architecture deployed in Mali and the region.

Lastly, France welcomes the signing of the technical arrangement between the United Nations, the European Union and the G-5 Sahel set out in resolution 2391 (2017) in record time. The next report of the Secretary-General on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force will provide a new foundation for responding to legitimate demands for support by the G-5 Sahel countries in terms of security and development. We will do that by considering the pace of the Joint Force's operationalization on the ground and by maintaining consensus on this issue within the Council.

Today it is imperative to move forward quickly towards the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It is that message of urgency and shouldering responsibility that we want to convey to all Malian parties today. We hope that it will bring about the awaited leap forward by those who hold the key to move Mali and the region towards lasting peace and stability. France will continue to stand with all those who want to advance in that direction.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We begin our statement by condemning in the strongest terms the recent attacks perpetrated, first, on 5 April against a camp of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Aguelhok, in north-east Mali, which claimed the life of two Chadian Blue Helmets, and in which 10 were wounded, and, secondly, the 6 April attack on Gao, which resulted in the death of a Nigerian peacekeeping staff member. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its sincerest condolences to the families of the fallen soldiers, to the Governments of Chad and the Niger and MINUSMA, and wishes the wounded a speedy recovery.

We welcome the presence of Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the

Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, for the detailed briefing that he will deliver as he always does. We are also grateful to Ambassador Olof Skoog, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali, for his succinct briefing.

Equatorial Guinea accords great importance to issues concerning Africa and the situation in Mali, a brotherly country to which we attach great interest. Equatorial Guinea is fully committed to achieving the stability and peace of the country. We express our full support for the Government's efforts to achieve peace, and, in that regard, we welcome its efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We call on all stakeholders to join those efforts. The international community must also monitor the process.

Mali continues to face major challenges. Terrorist activity remains latent and a real threat to the work that has been undertaken, as it will be nearly impossible to stabilize the political and security situation if terrorist groups are not eradicated. There is therefore a need to strengthen the Malian Government in its efforts in that struggle. It is important that the Government consolidate its presence in all regions of the country. In that process, it will require technical support that must be provided with the full acquiescence of the Government.

Terrorist activity in Mali extends beyond its borders and represents a serious threat to the entire region, for which reason it is important that cooperation in that struggle remain sensitive to that aspect, thereby placing emphasis on the importance of regional cooperation, including regional and subregional institutions, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. The decision of the Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel to create joint counter-terrorism forces for regional security is a welcome step in this direction.

A few months before the presidential elections scheduled for July 2018, it is important that significant progress be made on the ground in the short term. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea therefore encourages the Government of Mali and all the signatory movements to the Bamako Agreement to redouble their efforts to ensure the diligent implementation of all the provisions of the Agreement, in particular by means of the timeline of priority measures adopted at the twenty-third session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee and to find a consensus in the framework of the organization of the forthcoming presidential elections. This Agreement, which is a result of the Algiers process, remains the only inclusive and consensual framework capable of restoring peace and stability in Mali.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea fully subscribes to the communiqué of 23 March 2018 of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, welcoming with full satisfaction the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which we thank for its determination and sacrifices devoted to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Sahel. We reaffirm the importance of the Nouakchott process in promoting peace and security in Mali and the Sahelo-Sahara region and of intensifying its efforts to bring together stabilization and development efforts in the Sahel.

Referring to the report of the Secretary-General of 29 March 2018 (S/2018/273), it is necessary to strengthen support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and in particular the capacity of the Malian defence and security forces in terms of training and equipment, so that they are in a better position to deal with the asymmetric attacks they are suffering and with a view to having better management at the national level, in support of regional and international efforts to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and transnational organized crime.

Finally, we call on the international community to join efforts to support the Government of Mali in the framework of the humanitarian response plan 2018, launched in Bamako, which aims to provide, inter alia, basic assistance and protection in sectors such as food security, nutrition, water and sanitation.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mahamat Saleh Annadif and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, Ambassador Olof Skoog, for their comprehensive briefings on the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) over the past three months and the implementation of the Mali sanctions regime.

We are pleased to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, who is with us in the Security Council this morning.

We wish to pay tribute to the memory of the fallen peacekeepers serving under MINUSMA. Their greatest reward would be the restoration of full security and peace in Mali. It is in that spirit that we strongly condemn the series of terrorist attacks in Mali that claimed the lives of innocent civilians and MINUSMA peacekeepers. We express our sympathy and solidarity with Mali, and we support all the statements issued by the Council in this regard.

We appreciate the efforts of MINUSMA forces in carrying out their mandated tasks under extremely difficult circumstances. MINUSMA's ongoing support to Mali remains absolutely essential. It is indispensable, as Ambassador Delattre said. That is also the case with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, to which we attach great importance. We welcome the various efforts that have contributed to its full operationalization. We acknowledge the contributions of Operation Barkhane and of the European Union.

In the political area, we note with satisfaction the appointment of a new Prime Minister and his activities in working with the various stakeholders, including fostering an environment conducive to holding peaceful, credible and transparent elections throughout the country. We very much welcome the preparations made for the conduct of regional, district and municipal elections scheduled to be held this month and call upon all Malian parties to work towards the smooth conduct of these elections, exercise maximum restraint and resolve differences through dialogue. The announcement made by the Prime Minister regarding the measures to restore State authority and deliver peace dividends to the people is also commendable.

It is encouraging that a timeline on the implementation of the key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali was developed by the Agreement Monitoring Committee, and we urge that efforts be made for the speedy implementation of the timeline and the strict implementation of the peace Agreement. Those who are found to be creating obstructions should be held responsible in line with resolution 2374 (2017).

Despite the progressive registered, the continued deterioration of the security situation in Mali largely due to the terrorist attacks in the north and the centre of the country remains a source of serious concern. The destructive intentions of the terrorist groups to undermine State authority has resulted in a decrease in the number of State officials redeployed to the northern and central regions. The insecurity in northern and central Mali and the limited State presence has also worsened the humanitarian situation. Urgent action is therefore needed to quickly reverse this situation.

We recall when Mali was a leading democratic country in Africa and a beacon of hope for the continent. There is no reason why Mali could not reach that status again. It is with a view to assisting Mali regain the momentum to achieve that noble objective that the Council should do everything possible to have Mali's back. As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif has stressed, our support should not be limited to the security area, as much that is no doubt extremely critical.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks you, Sir, for calling today's meeting. We warmly welcome Mr. Coulibaly, Foreign Minister of Mali, to the Security Council. We would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif and Ambassador Skoog for their respective briefings.

Recently, there has been positive progress in terms of implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The new Government of the country is firmly committed to the peace process. China expresses its appreciation for the efforts being carried out by the Malian Government and the Malian people. At the same time, however, the security situation in northern and central Mali remains grim. Terrorist activities are rampant inside the country and in neighbouring areas, which seriously affects the peace process. The international community should continue to support the peace and reconciliation process in Mali and help the country to enhance its ability to provide for its own security and development.

First, it is necessary to increase input in the peace process. China hopes that the signatories to the Malian peace agreement will continue to demonstrate political will, fully implement the various provisions of the Agreement and work together to achieve national development and reconstruction. The international community should, on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of

the country, help Mali to increase its ability to provide for its own development and governance. The Chair of the Mali sanctions committee, Ambassador Skoog, recenlty led the Council's mission to the country and held talks with various parties concerned. China hopes that the sanctions committee will play a constructive role in facilitating the Malian peace process.

Secondly, the security situation in the country continues to deteriorate. The international community should, as requested by the Government, continue to support and help the Government to enhance its security and counter-terrorism capacity-building so that the latter can gradually assume the responsibility for maintaining order and security on its entire territory. It is necessary to take an integrated approach and, through regional cooperation, to respond to terrorist activities inside the country and along the borders. China welcomes the formation of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which will enable them to cope and respond to terrorist activities and threats on their own initiative, and hopes that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the international community will continue to provide support to the countries of the region and the Joint Force.

Thirdly, China appreciates and supports the tremendous work carried out by MINUSMA and Special Representative Annadif to facilitate the peace process and to strengthen security capacity-building in Mali. We hope that MINUSMA will continue to work in close cooperation and coordination with the Malian Government so as to help the country to strengthen its security capacity-building and promote disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

China commends the timely briefing by the Secretariat on MINUSMA's support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Forces and looks forward to an update from the Secretary-General's May report in that connection.

The issue of the security of MINUSMA personnel is deeply concerning. Since the start of this year, there have been three attacks on peacekeepers, resulting in the deaths of peacekeepers from Bangladesh, Chad and the Niger. China offers its condolences to the bereaved the families and to the Governments of Bangladesh, Chad and the Niger. The international community should do more to enhance the safety and security of the peacekeepers, and we hope that MINUSMA will beef up its security measures so as to ensure that supplies and installations for security are in place. At the same time, we hope that it will continue to strengthen communications with troop-contributing countries and donors so as to ensure that it has the equipment and resources necessary to execute its mandate and ensure self-protection.

China has more than 400 peacekeepers deployed to MINUSMA. We will resolutely honour our commitment to peace in Mali and, with the rest of the international community, to support the peace and reconciliation process in the country so as to help it to achieve peace, stability and development.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his very inciteful briefing, as always, and the work he does with his team on the ground.

I also want to express our appreciation for the presence, once again, of Minister Coulibaly, which is much appreciated and useful.

While it is clear that some progress is being made in Mali, concerns remain over the security situation and the pace of implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. I should like to pay tribute to the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in difficult and often dangerous circumstances. Our thoughts remain with the families of the peacekeepers from Chad and the Niger who lost their lives in the attacks that occurred in Aguelhok and Gao last week. The Malian Government has the primary responsibility to fight impunity for violence and ensure access to justice for all, including by prioritizing the reconciliation and justice measures in the peace Agreement. In this regard, we welcome the new Government's ambitious plans to restore security, particularly in central Mali — always, of course, in full respect for human rights.

On 24 January, the Security Council adopted a press statement (SC/13177) that clearly set out our expectations in relation to the key reforms foreseen under the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We expressed a shared sense of impatience at persistent delays in the Agreement's implementation, as well as our intention to assess progress and respond with appropriate steps, if needed. The time to evaluate progress has now come; we are ready to engage with all parties and key actors to do so.

We welcome the continued engagement of the parties in the implementation process. The recent visit of Prime Minister Maïga to the northern and central regions is encouraging, as is the ongoing drafting process of a national strategy on security sector reform. However, engagement must be further translated into tangible actions. We regret that most of the deadlines set out in the January timetable have not been met. We stand ready to continue to work with the parties to implement the roadmap, as further revised in March. We hope that there will be no further delays or adjustments to the timetable going forward.

We reiterate the need for substantial steps towards the full implementation of the peace Agreement as a prerequisite for successful elections. At the same time, it is crucial for Mali and the peace process that elections be duly and legitimately undertaken and that electoral timetables be fully respected. As the date set for the planned elections gets closer, there is no time to spare. All parties have a responsibility to honour their commitments and engage in confidence-building measures without further delay.

We welcome and echo the Secretary-General's call for the inclusion of women and youth in all the mechanisms supporting the implementation of the Agreement, as well as among interim authorities. Inclusivity and the full and effective participation of women, including in elected and nominated functions and decision-making structures related to the peace process, is essential to building a sustainable peace. For that reason, the meeting on 16 January between the President of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, the High Representative of the President for the peace process and MINUSMA with a delegation of women representing signatory armed groups and civil society was encouraging. However, the further institutionalization of women's inclusion in the mechanisms supporting the implementation of the Agreement is needed.

All the tools needed to support the peace process are now in place, including the independent observer, the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali and resolution 2374 (2017). We encourage the parties to take advantage of this opportunity. I want to again thank Foreign Minister Coulibaly for his availability and active engagement during the visit to Mali of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. It was clear that the parties took the sanctions instrument seriously, with all parties to the peace agreement expressing their support and engaging. That engagement needs to be sustained

Finally, MINUSMA's presence remains a key factor for stability in Mali. Its support for the Malian Government serves to build confidence between State actors and the population. We look forward to the conclusions of the independent strategic review, which we hope will identify ways to enhance the performance of the Mission. We are proud to contribute to MINUSMA's important work as it continues to support the parties to deliver on their commitment to implementing the outstanding provisions of the peace Agreement.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank Foreign Minister Coulibaly for taking time to join us today. I should like to join colleagues in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing and my Swedish colleague for his report and the expeditious work of his Committee.

Like other speakers, we condemn the recent attacks against the peacekeepers in Mali, and we offer our condolences to the families of the three peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who were killed last week, to MINUSMA, and to the Governments and the people of Chad and the Niger. I would just like to say how much I agree with what the Ethiopian Ambassador said about the greatest reward being progress on the ground. I think we all want to help MINUSMA to that end.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It is the primary basis for sustainable peace and stability in Mali, and we need progress also in order to deny space to extremists. As other speakers have noted, at the Security Council's last meeting on Mali in January (see S/PV.8163) and also in its subsequent press statement (SC/13177), we welcomed the renewed commitment of the Government and the signatory armed groups to actually implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation by the end of March, and that was agreed in the revised timetable of 16 January.

However, and disappointingly, it has been common theme of all interventions today that the persistent delays that tested the Council's patience in January are still continuing to frustrate us today, some time after the original deadline. There has been some positive progress, and I do not want to underplay that, but it is

also clear that this just has not been enough. The parties have agreed yet another new road map, rather than focusing on implementation of the existing timetable. There have been numerous revised deadlines and they have not been met. The delay to implementation will, unfortunately, have an impact on Mali's ability to conduct peaceful and inclusive presidential and parliamentary elections this year, and that, in turn, risks further destabilization to the security and humanitarian situation.

In January, the Council noted the tools available under the Mali sanctions regime and expressed its intention to respond with appropriate steps should the parties not implement the commitments they made. In view of the lack of progress, the United Kingdom now supports action to identify those obstructing, delaying or threatening the implementation of the Agreement, with a view to imposing sanctions on those actors.

As I have stated, it is down to the parties themselves to implement the Agreement; but, like others, I would like to note the key role played by MINUSMA in the implementation. We commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and all the staff, especially considering the challenging circumstances in which the military and civilian components are operating. As we look forward to renew MINUSMA's mandate in June, we must ensure that its mandate is clear, it focuses on supporting the implementation of the Agreement and it is adequately equipped to support peace in Mali.

With that in mind, I have another call on all Member States to ensure that the continued shortfall of troop numbers and equipment, including the need for further air cover, reconnaissance capability and armoured personnel carriers, is generously met. The United Kingdom is committed to tackling threats in the Sahel. Following the Anglo-French summit in January, we have contributed Chinook helicopters to support Operation Barkhane, and those are aligned and working closely with MINUSMA. That is all designed to promote stabilization in a bid to enable MINUSMA to carry out its core mandate.

Finally, let me say that we too are disturbed by reports of summary executions by the Forces Armées Maliennes, and we strongly encourage the Government to investigate those reports and ensure accountability for those responsible. I join the French Ambassador in stressing how important that is. Human rights reporting and monitoring should be prioritized in the MINUSMA mandate, and we hope that it will be able to address those and other important human rights violations by signatory armed groups.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We join others in expressing appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif and Ambassador Skoog for their comprehensive briefings. We also welcome to Chamber His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali. We thank him for being with us today. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's well-reflected quarterly report (S/2018/273) and make the following observations and recommendations for the Security Council's consideration.

It is clear that the accelerated implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali should be our main priority. Kazakhstan welcomes the efforts of the Malian Government, with the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the African Union and regional actors, to work with all sides towards advancing compliance with the Agreement. We hope that recent developments, including the visits by His Excellency Prime Minister Maïga to Mopti and Kidal and the visits to Mali by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali, and by the United Nations Panel of Experts, as well as the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali, will give impetus to the peace process. We encourage all parties to comply with the agreed road map to operationalize the "chronogram" for the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Agreement.

To achieve lasting peace and stability in Mali, it is necessary to implement the key provisions of the Agreement related to decentralization, defence and security areas. That should be accompanied by efforts to bring about national reconciliation, as well as ensure basic services, resilience-building, economic development, good governance and the rule of law. In that regard, we support the Government's multidimensional strategy for the central regions and emphasis on the importance of creating potential for the security-development nexus, as well as a revamped and innovative regional approach to finalize the development agenda for the northern regions. On the other hand, genuinely including women and youth in the

peace process and decision-making is also important for enduring stability.

Another critical task is to ensure the transparent, fair, peaceful and inclusive holding of the 2018 presidential and legislative elections in one of the leading democracies in Africa, as stressed today by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia. The assistance from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and from the international community will therefore be most critical for a successful electoral process and final elections, beneficial to all. Addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation is equally important. We therefore call on international partners and donors to fund the humanitarian response plan for 2018, and urge all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Kazakhstan is deeply concerned by the significantly deteriorating, grave security situation in the north and centre of Mali. To address the capability gaps of MINUSMA, it is essential to provide better equipment and predeployment training for the contingents, with enhanced equipment, surveillance and more robust combat capabilities, which is needed as situations of asymmetrical conflict arise in Mali. We believe that the ongoing strategic review of MINUSMA will contribute to enhancing the Mission's capabilities and improving the security situation. In that vein, it is time to protect not only the Mission's personnel, but also Malians themselves. Most of the activities and the budget of MINUSMA, from now on, should be rearranged accordingly.

We are convinced that the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) will substantially reinforce the efforts of MINUSMA and the national security forces of Mali to combat terrorism and other cross-border threats that require innovative approaches to completely eliminate the scourge. We commend international partners for mobilizing financial support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force at the Brussels conference, which will make the Force fully operational. We also support the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council made on 23 March on the situation in Mali.

Finally, we, like others, strongly condemn violent attacks perpetrated by terrorist groups against civilians, humanitarian workers, Malian security forces and MINUSMA. We would like to conclude by paying special tribute to the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice of their life for the cause of peace.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): Like others, I want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his briefing, which is always excellent, and also Ambassador Skoog for leading the mission to Mali and for his briefing today. I would also like to join others in welcoming Foreign Minister Coulibaly back to New York. It is great to see him here committed to moving forward on the peace process in Mali and undertaking the security challenges there.

Like others as well, I take this opportunity to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the three peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of peace during last week's attacks, as well as to the Governments Chad and the Niger. We also wish those injured in the attacks a very speedy recovery.

Foreign Minister Coulibaly vowed to the Security Council in January (see S/PV.8163) that his Government was committed to making progress on the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In addition, also in January, the signatories to the Agreement agreed to a revised timeline — or "chronogram", as it is referred to — which promised major gains in the Peace Agreement implementation by March. Now, in mid-April, there is still no substantive progress in the implementation of the Agreement. The United States has expressed concern many times in this Chamber, and the Council has made similar declarations in its statements and resolutions, that time is running out for the peace process in Mali. Yet we see little progress from the parties, despite our repeated sounding of the alarm.

In January the Security Council unanimously declared its intention, absent progress on the timeline, to respond with appropriate steps. Our tools include the sanctions regime we have authorized for political spoilers who engage in obstruction, including through the purposeful delay of the implementation of the Agreement. That also includes spoilers who obstruct through collusion with transnational organized criminals or those who plan or conduct attacks, regardless of affiliation. We look forward to working with our Council colleagues to identify, in a careful

and balanced way, individuals who fit that criteria and proceed accordingly.

There is truly no more time to waste, because Mali faces a desperate and worsening security crisis. We are alarmed about the deteriorating security situation in central Mali, in particular where violent extremists exploit absent State authority by increasing their control over disputed territory, restricting traditional practices, forcing the closure of schools and threatening civilians with violence if they cooperate with the Malian authorities. We should also recognize that violent extremists build their own community relations and administration in the absence of Government.

The dangers continue to grow, as the number of improvised-explosive-device attacks affecting civilians have increased dramatically. The recent doubling of lethal attacks against MINUSMA and Malian defence and security forces is also extremely troubling. However, the lack of State authority is not the only problem. When the State moves into territories, it must be seen as a positive thing for the local population. MINUSMA's support to deploy Malian armed forces in order to establish State presence in central Mali is crucial, but the operations must respect human rights, promote accountability and engage local communities. We are particularly concerned about the reports of possible extra-judicial killings in Diora last week, as well as other outstanding allegations of human rights abuses and violations by security forces. We look forward to the results of Government and MINUSMA investigations into such allegations, including appropriate steps to ensure accountability.

As others have done today, the United States commends the conclusion of the technical and financial agreements among the United Nations, the European Union and the Group of Five for the Sahel, and we applaud the ongoing operationalization of the Joint Force. With half a billion dollars in pledges at the February donors conference in Brussels, a technical agreement to provide the Force with logistical support and continuing regional efforts with partners to find holistic solutions to the region's problems, it is clear that Mali has dedicated partners that contribute their time, resources, political support and, in some instances, their lives to counter the violent extremist threat. It is all the more reason for Mali's signatory parties to the Peace Agreement to do their part.

We look forward to the results of the Secretary-General's strategic review of MINUSMA next month and urge the review team to make specific, clear and achievable recommendations for the Council's consideration, with the inclusion of specific recommendations for specific actors to undertake.

The situation in Mali is critical. The brave and courageous peacekeepers in MINUSMA and the Malian people deserve better than what the signatory parties to the Peace Agreement are delivering. MINUSMA cannot solve the current conflict in Mali. The Government of Mali and the signatory parties must chart the way to resolving Mali's underlying conflict so the country can turn its full attention to providing for its citizens and addressing the terrorist threat. We look forward to their immediate progress on the most recent road map.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like very much to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Annadif, and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali, His Excellency Ambassador Skoog. We appreciate their valuable briefings on the most recent developments in the Republic of Mali. We also commend the Special Representative on his efforts to ease political tensions among all the parties concerned and to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, Mr. Coulibaly, who is participating in today's meeting. In my statement today I will address three key issues, namely, the security, political and humanitarian situations.

First, with regard to the security situation, we are concerned about, and have paid close attention to, the increasing use of improvised explosive devices by terrorist groups over the past two years. The number of incidents in which such devices were used has exceeded 269 since the beginning of 2016. They have killed nearly 230 people and injured 480. We commend MINUSMA and other international partners, as well as the security forces in Mali, on their efforts to train and build the capacity of security personnel, provide the necessary military resources to the security sector and support Operational Coordination Mechanism. We must speed up the operationalization of the Mechanism to ensure that all combatants are integrated into the security sector, according to the number agreed upon,

in order to address security threats and ensure control over the northern areas.

The State of Kuwait extends its deep condolences to the families of the victims of the two terrorist attacks that took place in Aguelhok and Gao, as well as to the Governments of the Niger and Chad and to MINUSMA. We are deeply saddened about the ongoing deterioration of the security situation in Mali. We are concerned about the increasing number of civilian victims during the most recent reporting period and about continued attacks on security personnel, in particular the Blue Helmets, who risk their lives daily to ensure stability and security in Mali. We reiterate our support and gratitude to them and to all peacekeepers. Our gratitude will always fall short, regardless of how much we thank them.

With regard to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the State of Kuwait welcomes the pledges made during the donors conference held in Brussels on 23 February, which will enable the Force to carry out its tasks to the fullest. In that regard, we look forward to the report of the Secretary-General in May.

Secondly, concerning the political situation, we welcome the road map that was signed by all the relevant parties on 22 March. We urge them to commit themselves to the timeline agreed upon. We reiterate our position that the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is the main solution to the ongoing crisis in Mali. We commend the group of mediators, led by Algeria, the United Nations and participating regional and international organizations on their efforts to reduce security and political tensions in Mali. We also call upon the Government of Mali to play its role and create an environment conducive to implementing the Agreement by taking key political steps, such as cooperating with all parties to ensure the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, security sector reform and the decentralization process. We underscore that the absence of State authority in northern Mali will thwart comprehensive progress.

We welcome the visit by the Prime Minister Maïga to the city of Kidal, in northern Mali, to bridge the political gap and rebuild trust between the residents of that area and the central Government and to resume social services in the region. We also welcome the cooperation among all signatory parties to the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in preparation for the upcoming presidential and local elections. We also commend MINUSMA on its efforts to prepare for those elections. We urge the Government to ensure smooth and transparent elections in which all segments of the population can participate. We also encourage the Government to implement the remaining provisions of the Agreement in line with the agreed road map.

Thirdly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we urge all parties to honour their commitments in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to take the necessary steps to prevent collateral damage in military operations. We welcome the steps taken by the Malian Government to investigate such incidents. We reiterate our support to the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali, which will investigate gross violations and abuses of international law, including sexual violence in time of conflict. We also welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to combat human rights abuses.

We welcome the decision of the Government of Mali to adopt the Safe Schools Declaration. We fully believe that educating youth will promote security and stability in any country. We call upon the Government to redouble its efforts to reopen all of the schools that were closed throughout the country. We also commend the efforts of humanitarian organizations that are cooperating with the central Government to meet the humanitarian needs of the residents of the northern regions. We urge all parties to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

In conclusion, Kuwait underscores that the role of the United Nations in Mali and the Sahel is indispensable at this stage. We look forward to the outcome of the MINUSMA strategic review in preparation for the renewal of its mandate next June so as to make its work more efficient in the current difficult environment. I would like to emphasize that we are ready to work with all members of the Security Council during the coming period to ensure the necessary mandate for the Mission and facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his informative

briefing, and Ambassador Skoog for his presentation on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali.

(*spoke in French*)

I also wish to welcome Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me express my strongest condemnation of the recent attacks against MINUSMA in Aguelhok and Gao, which caused the deaths of one Nigerian and two Chadian peacekeepers, and injured 10 others. I would like to express my deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and to the Governments of Chad and the Niger, as well as to wish a quick and full recovery to those who were injured.

I would like to focus my intervention on three issues, that is, the political process, the security situation and the capacities of the MINUSMA.

On the political process, the implementation of the arduously achieved Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali remains slow in the face of the current challenges and needs. Tangible progress in priority areas, including decentralization, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, is crucial to advance the peace process. Holding the presidential elections on time will be vital for Mali to avoid serious political tension. However, organizing the elections in a situation where the State remains absent in a large part of the country may even deepen the crisis. In that context, restoring State authority over the entire territory should be of the utmost urgency. Poland supports all the necessary measures taken by the Security Council against individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the implementation of the peace process or the security and stability of Mali.

On the security situation, the situation in northern and central Mali continues to be critical and remains a serious threat to regional stability in the Sahel. Terrorist groups continue to carry out attacks against innocent civilians as well as MINUSMA and French and Malian forces. At the same time, counter-terrorism operations continue to raise grave human rights concerns. We believe that the fragile security situation in the region requires a multidimensional approach focused not only on military operations against terrorist networks and organized criminals, but also on creating job opportunities for youth and ensuring accountability for serious crimes that destabilize the peace process.

My third point concerns MINUSMA capacity gaps, which continue to affect the Mission's operations as well as the safety and security of its personnel. MINUSMA peacekeepers continue to be targeted by attacks that are increasingly complex and lethal. Poland welcomes the technical agreement among the United Nations, the European Union and the Group of Five for the Sahel, signed at the Brussels conference in February, with a view to providing the Joint Force with operational and logistical support through MINUSMA. We look forward to the Secretary-General's upcoming update of United Nations support to Joint Force.

In conclusion, Poland commends the tireless efforts of the men and women of MINUSMA in extremely difficult circumstances and fully supports the Special Representative Annadif. We also look forward to the outcome of the ongoing strategic review of the Mission, led by Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, which will provide guidelines for the future direction of MINUSMA.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would like to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the progress in the peace process in Mali and the support efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We would also like to thank Ambassador Olof Skoog, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali, for his briefing. We would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, to New York to take part in these meetings.

Mr. Annadif's briefing adequately informed us on the encouraging indicators in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, but also alerted us to the persistent threats, specifically the resurfacing of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges in northern and central Mali. Those challenges remain a concern for the Council and remind us of the need to pursue multidimensional support for MINUSMA, the Malian Government and all stakeholders in the crisis, with a view to sustainably restoring peace and stability to Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire, neighbour to Mali, is closely following the developments in the political and security situation in this brotherly country. We reiterate our support to the Government of Mali in the comprehensive and inclusive implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in the context of a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the current crisis. While the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the demonstrated progress in Mali, it also shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the delays in the implementation of the Agreement and calls on all actors to truly commit to its implementation, particularly with regard to keeping to the timeline for the upcoming local and presidential elections. Time is running out, and the progress towards the implementation of the Agreement would undoubtedly be a symbolic and irreversible gain for a peaceful electoral process and a source of stability.

To that end, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption, on 16 January, by the Agreement Monitoring Committee at its twenty-third session, with support from MINUSMA, of a timeline for priority actions set forth under the Agreement, particularly in the areas of political and institutional reform, defence and security, economic and social development, elections, justice and reconciliation. Côte d'Ivoire encourages the Agreement Monitoring Committee to seek national consensus on the need for all Malian stakeholders to take ownership of the Agreement and to work together to implement the Algiers road map with the valuable support of Algeria, which is leading international mediation efforts, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

With regard to national reconciliation, the Ivorian delegation would like to express its support for the recent visit undertaken by the Malian Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga to Kidal, Gao, Tessalit and Timbuktu. That visit, the first by a Malian Prime Minister since 2014, enabled an easing of tensions and restored trust by conveying a message of peace and reconciliation to the people and political actors of the region, who have suffered greatly as a result of the crisis.

In view of the persistent security threats in certain regions and the emergence of new hotbeds of intercommunal tensions, MINUSMA should continue to support the redeployment efforts of the national Administration and strengthen the capacities of institutions responsible for security in order to enable the State to ensure the protection of civilians. If they are to be effective, those efforts must be accompanied by support for the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission of former combatants and the National Council for Security Sector Reform. Indeed, that support is essential to countering the illicit traffic in weapons and building a republican national army for peace and development in Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire condemns the attack on a MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok on 5 April, which claimed the lives of two soldiers and wounded a dozen troops in the Chadian contingent. We salute the memory of the deceased soldiers and wish the wounded a speedy recover. That attack prompts the Council to consider the importance of bridging MINUSMA's capacity gaps in terms of protecting its camps and securing roads and supply convoys against attacks by terrorist groups. The improvement of MINUSMA's logistical capabilities through the provision of armoured vehicles and air assets for force projection and the evacuation of victims remains crucial. However, it must be preceded by calibrated training for troops on the asymmetric peacekeeping environment specific to northern and central Mali.

Our delegation welcomes the convergence of views and the unity of action prevailing among Council members with respect to MINUSMA's support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). We welcome the signing of the technical agreement among the United Nations, the European Union and the G-5 Sahel States, pursuant to resolution 2391 (2017) of 8 December 2017, with a view to providing, through MINUSMA, specific operational and logistical support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

In that vein, my delegation also welcomes the adoption by the G-5 Sahel States of a compliance framework on respect for human rights in order to ensure the necessary coherence between the military operations of the Joint Force and their obligation to protect human rights. Respect for the compliance framework, which incorporates the principle of accountability, reflects not only donor demands, but also the need for the engagement of the local population, which is a prerequisite for the success of the Joint Force operations.

In order to be effective, the security approach to restoring peace and stability in Mali must be supported by strong initiatives to provide lasting solutions to structural development challenges, such as employment for women and young people and their engagement in

the political process, as well as the fight against poverty and regional disparities. By addressing the root causes of conflict and its effects, we will be able to rebuild the foundations of lasting peace and security in Mali.

In conclusion, I would like once again to make an urgent appeal to all Malian stakeholders and convey to them our country's faith in their ability to overcome their differences in the best interests of the people in order to resolutely implement the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is grateful for the briefing we received from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, on the situation in the Republic of Mali and developments concerning the activities being carried out by the Mission on the ground. We also welcome the briefing we heard from the Ambassador of Sweden, Mr. Olof Skoog, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

Before beginning our statement, we would like to express our condolences and regret to the Governments of the Niger and Chad, as well as to the families and relatives of the MINUSMA staff who lost their lives in the deadly attacks that took place in Gao and Kidal in recent days.

Bolivia commends the important efforts made by the Government of Mali as it seeks to strengthen its institutional framework, achieve substantial progress in the legislative and electoral fields, and set benchmarks for the effective implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and its respective provisions in the context of inclusive political dialogue. We are hopeful that the strengthening of those processes will continue to encourage the Security Council, the international community and, of course, the people and Government of Mali.

We also welcome the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and the Head of MINUSMA for the efforts that he has undertaken to achieve peace and stability in that brotherly country. We welcome the cooperation of the countries that contribute troops and police contingents to serve in MINUSMA. We would like to express our gratitude to the MINUSMA peacekeeping staff who risk their lives, and we pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives in fulfilling their duties.

We acknowledge that the challenges faced by MINUSMA have evolved since the Mission was deployed in 2013. The Mission is not only faced with the violence unleashed by armed groups but must also counter the growing threat posed by terrorist groups and transnational crime. The terrorist threat continues to put at risk the well-being and the very lives of the civilian population and has put the brakes on the economic growth and social development of the country, which has contributed to the proliferation of transnational organized crime and its repercussions in the subregion, in addition to having significantly depleted the capacities of the Malian security forces, which have been the subject of horrific attacks.

Asymmetric attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small arms and light weapons continue to worsen conditions on the ground. We are deeply concerned to see that the insecurity in the north and centre of Mali has continued to grow. Attacks on State authority and Government institutions make it abundantly clear that there is a need to craft strategies that would provide for more effective and efficient security mechanisms in the more vulnerable sectors and regions.

MINUSMA's priority should be to protect civilians who live under the threat of physical violence, bearing in mind that the main responsibility in that area lies with the Malian authorities. We deem it vital to point out that the Malian forces have suffered the most lethal attacks and saw an increase in the number of casualties and injuries. According to the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/273), 45 soldiers were killed and 80 injured, compared with the 23 killed and eight injured in the previous reporting period. This underscores the vital need for MINUSMA, in line with resolution 2364 (2017), to adopt a more active and proactive stance in order to be able to fulfil its mandate.

On that understanding, we encourage MINUSMA to continue to promote the implementation of the memorandum of understanding with the Malian Government, which will allow it to support the Malian armed forces in the operational field as well as in terms of intelligence-gathering, medical evacuation,

the elimination and handling of explosive ordnance, and demining.

We therefore call on the Mission to redouble its efforts in the area of coordination and exchange of information with the Malian Government, so that concrete, factual data can be obtained that can then be captured in the relevant reports to be received by the Security Council. The goal here is to maintain support and enhance confidence-building measures between the host State and MINUSMA.

In the light of the aforementioned, it is clear that the security situation in Mali and in the broader Sahel region is riven with major challenges. Bolivia highlights the efforts made by regional and subregional organizations, led by the African Union, in cooperation and coordination with the Group of Five for the Sahel joint force. We believe that such cooperation is vital in order to combat transnational organized crime and to ensure better and safer living conditions for the local civilian population.

To conclude, it is vital to underscore that in this particular instance the deep-rooted causes of conflict that led to the volatile security situation in the region are intrinsically related to the consequences of the policies of interventionism and regime change. Indeed, in the wake of the 2011 conflict in Libya, the collateral destabilizing effects led to chaos, terrorism and the militarization of the Sahel, with regrettable consequences that persist to this day.

We call on and encourage the international community to continue to lend its assistance, through technical support and economic and humanitarian cooperation, to all initiatives aimed at benefiting the Malian people, with a view to achieving definitive peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Annadif, as well as the Chair of the sanctions Committee, Mr. Olof Skoog, for their respective briefings. We are pleased to note the presence among us of His Excellency Minister Coulibaly. As the Minister is aware, there is a deep friendship between the peoples of our two countries, a friendship forged by 35 years of development cooperation and our participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) since 2014. I pay tribute to the soldiers of this peacekeeping operation who laid down their lives, including in particular Dutch soldiers, in previous years.

Two weeks ago, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, during its presidency of the Security Council, convened an open debate on collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations (see S/PV.8218). Today's meeting affords the Council an opportunity to translate the ambitions voiced during that debate into concrete measures. Such measures are imperative in the light of the plethora of problems facing Mali, including terrorism, drug and weapons smuggling, human trafficking and the threat of escalation and spillover to the entire Sahel region and beyond, even to Europe.

In that context, I wish to focus on three elements: first, the primacy of politics; secondly, performance; and thirdly, the prevention of impunity.

My first point concerns the primacy of politics. As was acknowledged by all those who participated in the open debate, United Nations peacekeeping operations must above all support the political process. Only with a negotiated political settlement can lasting peace and security come within reach. The support provided by MINUSMA for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has proved essential and remains so today.

The international community has invested heavily in Mali. In return, we expect of all Malian parties that they shoulder their responsibility to implement the Peace Agreement. We join other colleagues today in urging all signatories to renew their commitment to the peace process. In the absence of an inclusive process, peace will elude us. During the aforementioned debate, Ms. Fatimata Touré noted that only 3 per cent of those formally involved in the peace process are women. We must see to it that all Malians are adequately represented, as my Swedish colleague mentioned.

The most urgent steps that need to be taken to implement the peace agreement include, first, decentralization; secondly, security-sector reform; and thirdly, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in the Malian armed forces. We expect all Malian parties to deliver on this. These measures are critical to restore the legitimacy of the State in the north and to regain people's trust. Progress has been far too slow for too long. We must not shy away from imposing sanctions on spoilers of the peace process, including trafficking networks.

My second point relates to performance. Action for Peacekeeping, an initiative launched by the Secretary-General during the open debate I mentioned, emphasizes the fact that all of us bear the responsibility to act. We must also dare to engage in an honest process of reflection on MINUSMA's mandate and on the capacities necessary for it to be implemented. The shifting conditions in Mali require MINUSMA to be flexible and innovative. Last Thursday's and Friday's attacks must serve as a reminder for Member States of their responsibility to provide MINUSMA with the appropriate equipment in terms of both troops and capacities. Also crucial is the need to foster a genuinely integrated approach among the military, civil and police pillars, specifically when it comes to information-sharing and intelligence-led planning. With a view to the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate, in June, it would be advisable that the Security Council receive the strategic plan requested in its resolution 2364 (2017).

The third point I wish to raise is the prevention of impunity. Lack of accountability for the perpetrators of human rights violations in Mali promotes instability and jihadism. The restoration of State institutions, including the security forces, is a basic condition for achieving stability, but that stability can be sustainable only within the framework of the rule of law, which means that impunity is impermissible. The recent discovery of a mass grave in central Mali unfortunately shows the extent of the problems that the country is facing. We call on the Malian Government to ensure that the guilty parties are held accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, the only way to achieve the Malian people's trust is by demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the rule of law. In that context, the Netherlands welcomes the fact that the Malian authorities recently handed over Mr. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Given the friendship between the peoples of our two countries, we would like to see justice and sustainable development for the people of Mali as soon as possible.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to welcome Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, and to thank him for finding the time to join our meeting. I also thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his informative briefing on the situation in Mali, and our Swedish colleague, Mr. Olof Skoog, for his thorough report (S/2017/1126). On the whole, we share their concerns about the troubling developments in Mali and believe that the dangerous potential for conflict there remains. Unfortunately, the geographic extent of terrorist and extremist operations has been expanding, particularly recently. What can be done to counter it?

First and foremost, all Malian stakeholders should acknowledge the fact that the speedy and comprehensive implementation of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is in both their individual and national interests. In that regard, we welcome the promulgation of the updated road map for its implementation agreed to on 22 March between the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad. We hope it will give new impetus to completing the process of distributing authority between the country's centre and its regions and to the successful and much-needed security-sector reform. It will be particularly important to complete as soon as possible the process of re-establishing the civilian authorities and to use Government armed forces and local volunteers to establish joint patrols and military bases in the North, without which it will be impossible to combat terrorist activity. At the same time, of course, we must not lose sight of the country's central areas, where extremists have once again reared their heads.

The problem of ensuring security is also a major issue with regard to the presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections to be held this year. It is in the interests of all those in the military and political forces working within the legal framework to ensure that the elections will run smoothly and be seen to be legitimate.

We believe the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is very important. We firmly condemn last week's attacks on its peacekeepers, which unfortunately claimed several lives. Such tragic events should mobilize us to finally bring the Mission up to full operational readiness. We realize that MINUSMA's successful implementation of its mandate depends in part on its Blue Helmets being provided with essential equipment. We urge the troop-contributing countries not to delay honouring the commitments that they have made not

only regarding their deployment of contingents, but also in providing all the necessary equipment.

It will be difficult to achieve domestic political stability without normalizing the situation in the region as a whole. In that connection, we support the concrete steps taken by the Group of Five for the Sahel in establishing its Joint Force to combat terrorist groups and conducting their first successful operation on the ground.

As I said, we have perused Mr. Skoog's report on the work of the 2374 Committee with interest. I would like to point out that in September of last year, Russia responded to Bamako's appeal by supporting the adoption of resolution 2374 (2017), establishing that subsidiary body of the Council. We believe that the direct use of sanctions should be a measure of last resort and that rushing to impose restrictions will hinder the entire settlement process.

I would like to touch on one other issue. Much has been said about the reasons for the ongoing deplorable situation in the region, but one is truly worthy of special mention — the current state of affairs in Libya, the result of the overthrow of the Government in 2011. Because of it, a virtually unchecked flood of terrorism and weapons has been pouring out from there into West Africa. In that regard, we stand in solidarity with the opinions repeatedly expressed at the international conference on the Sahel, which concluded its work in Nouakchott on 29 March, that the Libyan crisis was not just the main trigger destabilizing the situation in the region but has continued to be a persistent negative factor in it. It is crucial that Member States remember that lesson for the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. We also thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and Ambassador Olof Skoog, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, for their briefings.

Despite some progress, Peru notes with concern the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Mali, particularly in the central and northern regions of the country. Clashes continue among armed groups, as do the activities of terrorist groups in areas with a weak State presence. We stress the importance of the implementation of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In accordance with the timeline and the road map adopted in March, we encourage the promotion of defence, security, decentralization and socioeconomic development with a view to building lasting peace in the country. We commend the work of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, the independent observer and the 2374 Sanctions Committee in support of the implementation of the Agreement. We would also like to highlight the role of MINUSMA.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We also underscore the need to move forward with the following three goals.

The first concerns the holding of free and fair elections this year. We believe that it is important to ensure that the process is conducted transparently and inclusively, includes broad citizen participation, and serves to bring more women and young people into political life. Regional and international support are also important.

The second goal concerns the implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for former combatants, as well as reform of the security sector. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the Malian Government and encourage it to continue to move ahead and pick up the pace.

Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that the crisis in Mali is connected with the entire Sahel region. We consider it necessary to pay special attention to the links between terrorism and cross-border organized crime and to strengthen the regional response to these scourges, inter alia, by increasing operational and logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). In that regard, we welcome the signing of the technical agreement between MINUSMA, the European Union and the members of the G-5 Sahel, in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017), and encourage donors to continue to contribute to that effort.

Thirdly, with regard to the strengthening of MINUSMA's operational capabilities, we are concerned that 100 per cent of the authorized force has not yet been deployed and that it continues to lack equipment. We

look forward to the results of the MINUSMA strategic review, which will help redefine the Mission's action plan and strategies in the light of the challenges on the ground in the forthcoming renewal of its mandate.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mali.

Mr. Coulibaly (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by mentioning the terrible news that came to us this morning about the plane crash in Algeria, in which 257 people died. On behalf of Mali and on behalf of everyone in the Chamber today, I would like to express our feelings of compassion and condolences to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, a country that is dear to us and which plays an absolutely central role in the peace process in Mali.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month of April and express to the delegation of the Netherlands our appreciation for the remarkable manner in which it conducted the work of the Council over the past month. I would also like to convey the message of deep gratitude of the President of the Republic of Mali to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres, for his personal commitment to the well-being of the people of Mali, the Sahel region and the world as a whole.

Recent visits by United Nations officials and envoys illustrate the quality of the cooperation that has existed between the United Nations and the Government of Mali since the beginning of this crisis, the settlement and peace processes of which are under way. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the period under review (S/2018/273) and thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his briefing, which focused on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the political perspectives and the actions carried out by MINUSMA.

A little less than three months ago, on 23 January, during an exercise similar to this morning's meeting (see S/PV.8163), I informed the Security Council of the four priority objectives that the President of the Republic had assigned to the new Government team, the first of which was the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which emerged from the Algiers process. Today Mali welcomes the recognition in the Secretary-General's report of the new impetus given to the peace process since the establishment by the President, on 30 December 2017, of the Government headed by Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga.

The Head of Government's tour from 22 to 26 March in the northern and central regions of Mali, specifically in Tessalit, Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Koro, Bankass, Bandiagara and Djenné, regions affected by destabilization and infested by terrorists, is part of this dynamic. The tour lived up to all its promises. It embodied the hope of true peace and reconciliation in our country. The Prime Minister's visit not only addressed the legitimate concerns of our people with respect to the expected peace dividends, but also established the Government's commitment to continuing its efforts for the full and complete implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation.

In Mali, the Government understands and shares the impatience with the delays in the implementation of certain provisions of the Agreement, but I would like to reassure the Security Council and the international community as a whole, which is assisting Mali, of the Government's firm determination, under the authority of the President, to bring the peace process in Mali to a successful conclusion. But we can already look back with satisfaction at a number of advances that have been made in the implementation of the Agreement.

The first appreciable achievements, which are not often mentioned, are reflected in the total cessation of all belligerence not only among the signatory parties but also between the Malian army and the signatory movements. Council members will recall that at a one time the clashes among these groups seriously undermined the implementation of the Agreement.

I would like to point out the progressive redeployment of the Administration in the northern and central regions through the recent appointment of prefects and sub-prefects and the ongoing strengthening of the interim authorities to respond to an appeal launched by the international community, for which the Malian State has allocated very significant budgetary resources despite the well-known economic situation of Mali and our limited means. I addition — and this has been mentioned several times this morning — I would point to the adoption, on 22 March, of the road map for

the implementation of the timeline that we presented to the Council in January. This is important because all parties have reviewed the implementation plan for this timeline and have signed this new document, which will soon be presented to those Council members who have not already seen it.

The timeline not only presents a realistic approach but it also expresses a commitment by the various parties. Our position here in January was that the Security Council should receive this timeline, consider it as a working document and activate all possible tools, including the Sanctions Committee, so that all actors would be moved to respect commitments.

This new road map, which is not in fact an additional document, but is a version of the actions to be implemented wisely and perhaps to be sorted out according to what is absolutely urgent, what can wait a little bit and perhaps what divides us that needs internal Malian discussion in order to move forward, is, in my opinion, a document that will not only allow us to navigate the presidential elections in July, which will be partly secured by the signatory movements — this commitment has been made — but also to lead us to the legislative elections at the end of the year. This year's electoral process, once completed, will move us towards the local and regional elections, which are very important for the implementation of the Agreement and in which we will see the emergence of new actors from the signatory movements who will also be ready to stand for election, take control of the regions and restore political balance to the country.

I would also highlight the holding of the high-level workshop on security reform. The Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Mr. Zuev, was in Bamako and attended that exercise, which heralded good news with regard to the reform process, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. There were constructive discussions on the issue of DDR and the registration of ex-combatants in many regions. We are expecting that the cantonment sites will soon receive the first ex-combatants to speed up all those steps.

Clearly, all those gains are fragile. I know that. We know that. They are all the more fragile because the implementation of the Agreement is taking place in a complex and difficult environment, characterized by the activities of groups linked to terrorism, violent extremism or trafficking, mixed up with the interests set by a political agenda of terrorist groups who want to replace States building democracy, or national States, by States where the laws of evil and crime prevail. That manifests itself at the transnational level, which, as many have said, largely goes beyond Mali's borders. That project of violence, obscurantism and enslavement is a cross-border issue. Our approach in Mali is subject to that dynamic, which looms over the entire Sahel region.

Those groups seek to establish a sanctuary for criminal organizations in our region. We have to fight every day in order for our stabilization and peace processes for the Sahel region to flourish in a climate that is endlessly disrupted by those groups. It is therefore important to consider consistent international action in support of the initiatives of our countries, such as the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), so that we can move forwards towards peace and ownership of our process.

An objective set by the President of the Republic for the Government is to contain the increasing insecurity in the centre of the country. In that regard, we welcome the encouraging results of the implementation of the integrated security strategy for the centre with a view to ensuring calm and the effective restoration of State authority to that part of the country. The Government is increasingly showing its presence and providing basic social services for our population. We should note that, during his visit, the Prime Minister highlighted those central regions so that the population feels the State presence and its commitment to restoring order there.

As I said early, the regional dimension of the insecurity is part of the mandate entrusted to the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel. The implementation level of the Force should be commended. Mali continues to fully support the Niger presidency, which assumed the leadership of that body a few months ago. In the context of international solidarity, we would like to support the appeal of the Secretary-General for the release of the funds pledged at the Brussels meeting of 23 February. That is extremely important because that tool complements the actions led by United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

The third priority of our Government is the successful organization of the elections. I would like to clearly and categorically affirm that our Government is determined to hold transparent, inclusive and

credible elections throughout the country, in line with the constitutional timeline. As I said, the visit of the Prime Minister to the northern region, provided an opportunity for the signatory movements to affirm their support for that process. It is essential that those movements help to ensure the security of the electoral process. We will start with the election of the President of the Republic, which is the most important election, followed by legislative elections for the new Parliament. The material and logistical provisions have been made for the vote to be free, fair and peaceful. The electoral register will be audited independently so that key tool for the elections enjoys consensus.

In its electoral practices, Mali has not experienced post-electoral conflict violence because we have always respected the principles of inclusivity and consensus in advance. In the same way, today there is a framework of consultation among the ministries, regional administrations and all elements of our society, including civil society. The concerns expressed about the inclusion of women and young people in that process have been taken into account. Since November, Mali has been registering those who have reached the age of legal majority in order for the registration to be complete. That exercise was carried out and, at the time of the audit, we can be sure that our electoral register is fully agreed.

I would like to say that there is no place for impunity in Mali. All acts found to contravene the law or respect for human rights will be properly dealt with in the courts. Judicial arrangements are in place and the prosecutor is engaged. Any person found guilty of human rights violations will be appropriately dealt with under the law. We know that is a condition for the sincere commitment of all to the peace process and for trust to be restored in our country. However, I would like to express our reservations with regard to reported events, in particular the indifference of our army when there was a series of fires in some villages. In the most polite way, I would like to refute that. Our army could not be indifferent to a part of the Malian population being subjected to events that threaten the lives of their fellow citizens. For all the rest, we will await the findings of the judicial authorities so that any procedures provided for under the law can be implemented, where necessary.

Here in this Chamber, I would like to affirm our support for the actions of Ambassador Skoog, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, whom we hosted. Before the Council, we would like to affirm our full and complete cooperation with all missions — those of the independent observer and of the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali — and with everything that is necessary for the peace process and cooperation between Mali and the United Nations to be not only smooth but also marked by the seal of trust.

The humanitarian situation is worrisome. Clearly, we expect the support of the international community while we ourselves, in line with our resources, which are of course limited, do our utmost to support our fellow citizens who may find themselves in a fragile humanitarian situation.

With regard to schools, some have already reopened. The Prime Minister has taken steps to ensure that all Koranic schools in the centre are integrated into the national educational system in order to take charge not only of the material but also of the curriculum taught in those schools. Those challenges are significant. We support the appeal of the Secretary-General to the countries that have pledged to fulfil their commitments in order to bridge the gap between the available funds, at approximately $8 million, and the urgent humanitarian needs, estimated at a total of $263 million.

In conclusion, I would also like to express our unequivocal support for MINUSMA's work. We commend the outstanding leadership of the Head of MINUSMA, Mr. Annadif, who works tirelessly every day to personally ensure the sound and smooth functioning of MINUSMA. We also commend his team, which works so hard in Bamako on a daily basis. That is essential, particularly at a time when the strategic review is under way and when, I have no doubt, in June important decisions will be taken for the future of MINUSMA.

I align line myself with the appeals made to increase the resources available to MINUSMA and for measures to be taken to enhance the protection of the troops, as well as for greater interaction between MINUSMA, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and all those involved in military efforts.

The situation is worrisome, as many here in the Chamber have said. Nonetheless, I remain convinced that hope springs eternal, and we know that we can achieve the noble mission set before us. Malians are committed to the cause, as is the international community. I think that each step we take is a sure step, albeit a baby step. All that we have achieved thus far in restoring

trust between the different players is invaluable and will allow us to build upon the achievements that we have made.

I would like once again to reassure the members of the Council of my Government's commitment and determination to leave no stone unturned in order to ensure that this process continues to make the headway that we are all awaiting and that it follows an agenda to continue moving forward rather than sliding backwards.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations S PV.8230

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8230th meeting
Thursday, 12 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Michon
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

I now give the floor to Ambassador Llorentty Soliz.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia): I am pleased to have this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in its task of overseeing the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

As we all recognize the importance of resolution 1540 (2004) as a key element in the global effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery to non-State actors, including terrorists, I must stress that we have a truly challenging task in overseeing the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Resolution 1540 (2004) is a platform for cooperation to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. We need to be clear that without cooperation it would be impossible to address the issue at the global level. In that context, I would like to inform the Security Council about the main activities of the 1540 Committee since my previous briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7985) and to give an overview of upcoming events and some prospects for this year.

In 2018, the Committee continues to build on the momentum imparted to its work by the outcome of the 2016 comprehensive review and the subsequent resolution 2325 (2016), of 15 December 2016. Under that resolution the Security Council directed the 1540 Committee to intensify its efforts to promote the full implementation of all obligations under resolution 1540 (2004) by all States. To that end, detailed proposals were incorporated into the programme of work for 2018, which will shortly be submitted. The Committee, inter alia, plans to hold discussions on enforcing appropriate effective laws for the prohibition of activities under paragraph 2 of resolution 1540 (2004); to take note of the continually evolving nature of the risks of proliferation; and to hold a closed expert-level meeting of the Committee to consider other issues highlighted in resolution 2325 (2016).

In addition, a report on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) from all Member States remains one of the highest priorities for the Committee. In that regard, I am pleased to inform the Security Council that we received two first reports in 2017, from Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe. More recently, in early 2018, we also received a first report from Timor-Leste. That brings the number of States that have submitted national reports to 180. However, we still have before us the challenge of 13 non-reporting States. To achieve universal reporting as soon as possible may include issuing notes verbales to Member States that reiterate the requirements on reporting on national implementation and meeting country representatives on the margins of the General Assembly.

States are also encouraged to inform the Committee of their points of contact for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). In 2017, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica and Mauritania did that, bringing the number of States that have now done so to 101. To strengthen the capabilities of the points of contact and of their network as a whole, in 2017 the Committee organized one regional training course for the Asia-Pacific region. The seminar was hosted for the second time by China. Two more training courses for national points of contact are planned in 2018: one for the African region in Addis Ababa in June, in cooperation with the African Union, and the other for the region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Russia in September.

Voluntary national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) were another priority of the Committee, which continued to work with the support of regional and subregional organizations to help Member States to develop and to implement such voluntary action plans. The Committee received five new national action plans during 2017, while Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan already submitted their reviewed and second voluntary national action plans. As of today, 31 national action plans have been received.

The Group of Experts of the Committee participated in round tables intended to develop new national action

plans in El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mongolia, Suriname, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The work on national action plans with other countries will be continued at their request during the current year.

The Committee also continued to promote the sharing of experience, including through peer reviews, in order to evaluate and to reinforce effective practices in the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The peer review meetings conducted in 2017 by Colombia and Chile and by Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, respectively, constitute very good examples of that effective mechanism. The Committee will continue to support States that wish to conduct peer reviews and will actively encourage such meetings, where appropriate.

To enhance its capacity to better monitor the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), the Committee considered and approved a revised matrix format last year. The changes made streamlined the existing matrix by better reflecting the obligations set out in resolution 1540 (2004). In accordance with resolution 2325 (2016), the revised matrix also takes into account the specificities of States with respect to their ability to manufacture and to export related materials. During 2018, the Group of Experts will convert the existing matrices to the new format.

With the objective of better supporting States in developing more detailed and effective assistance requests and, in response to their requests, better providing them with effective assistance that meets their needs, the Committee revised its assistance template in March 2017. That will, in effect, strengthen the Committee's efforts as matchmaker. The new assistance template is published on the Committee's website. The Committee received new assistance requests from Belize, Kenya and Tajikistan. The requests were sent to potential assistance providers, and summaries were published on the Committee homepage, as usual.

In 2017, the Committee also considered how to improve the facilitation of technical assistance to States and decided to task its Group of Experts, at a State's invitation and subject to available resources, to actively facilitate assistance. The Committee thereby seeks to close the gap in assistance for those States and regions that are committed to implementing their obligations but have not been recipients of assistance offers so far.

In 2017, the Committee continued to exchange information with the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, involved them in its outreach activities, for example, the training courses for national 1540 points of contact, and encouraged them to highlight obligations pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in their model legislation and/or guidelines or training of States, as appropriate. In 2017, there was a total of 53 outreach events by and with international, regional or subregional organizations in which the Chair, Committee members and experts participated.

The Committee also continued to develop its website as a tool to raise public awareness and to serve as a source of information and a resource on resolution 1540 (2004) for use by Member States, Committee members, civil society and industry. The new design of the website, finalized in 2016, provides enhanced usability and appeal.

On 24 December 2017, after consultations with the Committee, the Secretary-General appointed six new experts to the Group of Experts, as during the year the term of some previous experts had ended. Three new experts have already joined the Group, while the remaing new colleagues will join by the end of April. In that regard, a process will be initiated to select a new Coordinator for the Group of Experts in the near future. The outgoing members of the Security Council, Japan and Egypt, respectively, serve as the Coordinators of the Committee's Working Group I, on monitoring and national implementation, and Working Group III, on cooperation with international organizations, including the Security Council committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001). I would like to thank both delegations for their vital contributions to the work of the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to welcome Mr. Enri Prieto of the delegation of Peru, as Coordinator of Working Group I, and Mr. Antonin Benjamin Bieke of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, as Coordinator of Working Group III, both of whom started working as Coordinators on 4 April.

I sincerely thank those States that have made substantial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities, directly in support of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Without those contributions the Committee would be severely hampered in fulfilling

its mandate in overseeing the implementation of the resolution and in facilitating capacity-building where it is needed most. In 2017 funds were used from grants provided in previous years by Canada, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea and the United States, and from new donations made by Japan and the European Union in 2017.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a few additional points with regard to the Committee's planned outreach activities in the near future.

My own country, Bolivia, plans to host a regional conference for Latin American and Caribbean countries on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in May. The Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, together with the 1540 Committee, will convene a conference for the States of Latin America and the Caribbean on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and its follow-up resolutions in La Paz from 9 to 10 May. The conference is geared towards actively supporting the implementation of the resolution in the Latin American and Caribbean region. It will provide a platform for States to present existing laws and regulations that serve to facilitate the implementation of the resolution. It will also provide an opportunity to exchange views and effective practices on the handling of related materials, with a view to strengthening the region's record on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The Committee is considering holding another regional assistance conference at an appropriate time in 2018. The Committee will continue to build on the good collaboration already established with key international organizations in order to facilitate the delivery of assistance and support for related activities.

With regard to cooperation with international and regional organizations and United Nations entities, the tasks set out in resolution 2325 (2016) are specific. The Committee's Group of Experts has already held a meeting with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to plan country visits to be conducted later this year and with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to discuss how best to collaborate to support the activities of the 1540 Committee, in particular with regard to scientific and technological trends and the risk of misuse by non-State actors. With regard to the key international organizations that support its work, the 1540 Committee will take advantage of visits to New York by the heads of those organizations to meet with the Committee in order to encourage their support for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

In continuation of the German initiative known Wiesbaden process, which is synonymous with active dialogue between States and industry on the effective implementation of export controls, two more regional events designed to engage the private sector are planned for 2018. One is a regional meeting to be held on 16 and 17 April in New Delhi, and the other will take place in September in the Republic of Korea. Such activities are supported by a grant provided by Germany to the Trust Fund. If members of the Committee would like to receive additional information on the events, in particular with regard to possible participation, I urge them not to hesitate to contact the Group of Experts.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors is a clear and evolving reality. With the strong support of the States Members of the United Nations and other international partners, the 1540 Committee will continue its efforts to prevent that risk. With the support of its Group of Experts and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Committee stands ready to cooperate with and, as requested, provide assistance to States in their efforts to implement resolution 1540 (2004) so as to contribute to achieving our common objective of preventing the catastrophic use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

I would like to thank all delegations that participated not only in our work but also in developing our programme of work, which has just been distributed. Without the continuous assistance of all delegations, it would be impossible to achieve our goals.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Llorentty Solíz for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I sincerely thank our Bolivian colleague for his briefing on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We welcome the new Coordinators. At the outset, I would like to state that we were very pleased to have been paired with Equatorial Guinea in terms of capacity-building.

Resolution 1540 (2004) was the first subject on which I worked when I came to the Security Council, 10 years ago — my first time here. I am therefore very pleased to have this opportunity to talk about it today and to be able to say that for the United Kingdom the 1540 Committee is a vital component of the international order. We need to empower it to fulfil its mandate, and we need to support it to the hilt.

As many of us have already said this week, we risk seeing a situation that the Security Council should dread — chemical and biological weapons becoming a routine part of fighting. Regrettably, we have been confronted in very recent times by multiple incidents of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by non-State actors. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism found that Da'esh used mustard gas on at least two occasions in Syria. There are multiple instances of mustard gas use by Da'esh in Iraq. A planned chemical terrorism attack was thwarted in Australia in July last year. Those incidents clearly exemplify why the 1540 Committee and its work to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by non-State actors is so important.

Those events are awful enough. Yet, in acts of unbelievable irresponsibility, those risks have been exacerbated by the use of weapons of mass destruction by State actors. The chemical-weapons attacks in Douma and the attempted murders in Salisbury are the most recent examples, but there is also the assassination of Kim Jong-nam in Malaysia and the horror of Khan Shaykhun a little more than a year ago. I take this opportunity to state that, with regard the invitation from the Council for us to update members on the incident in Salisbury, we have requested a meeting next week to deliver a briefing on the findings of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The use of WMD by States is a worrisome pattern that clearly undermines our collective efforts to deter and eradicate the use of such weapons by State and non-State actors alike. We very strongly support the work to increase the capacity of States and are encouraged by the fact that there are now only 13 non-reporting States. Any non-reporting is troubling, but it is good that the number is decreasing. As I said, we were delighted to be paired with Equatorial Guinea and provide support.

Nonetheless, it is clear that we stand on the cusp of a nightmare where weapons of mass destruction are used with impunity, where our citizens live in real fear of an indiscriminate attack at any time and without warning. It is not enough just to condemn that, we need to find a way to take meaningful action and ensure that there are meaningful consequences for perpetrators. We have all benefited from the international order that has kept us safe since the end of the Second World War. It behooves us all to make every effort to uphold that international architecture. It is clear that not all countries share that view, and we have talked about that several times this week. With respect to the 1540 Committee, there is one Council member that has sought, at every opportunity, to slow progress and dilute the substance of every proposal, whether that be the programme of work, deadlines, calls to action or efforts to take progress forward. All of those have, sadly, been consistently watered down, and the Group of Experts has even been prevented from travelling.

If we are serious about dealing with the threats that the Committee was set up to counter, then this state of affairs cannot continue. Since last February the 1540 Committee has met formally only once, and barely any progress has been made with respect to the actions agreed in the 2017 programme of work. That means also that the commitments made in the relatively modest resolution 2325 (2016) have not been fulfilled. The new programme of work has only just been agreed, two months later than legally mandated. In those two months, the Committee was left without clear objectives or activities to pursue. I cannot think of any legitimate reason that any country would want to affect the work of the 1540 Committee in such an adverse way. I appeal to everybody around the table to redouble efforts so that we have an ambitious programme of work for the Committee. We must stand up for the universal norms and standards we have spent decades building to create an effective and powerful non-proliferation regime, whether that deals with State actors or non-State actors.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me express our gratitude and appreciation to the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), my esteemed colleague from Bolivia, for his briefing on the work of the Committee and for his efforts to achieve the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). We furthermore welcome the new members and Coordinators of the Group of Experts and wish them well in their new positions.

I would like to touch upon three points: first, the threat of weapons of mass destruction; secondly, the

importance of resolution 1540 (2004); and thirdly, our work going forward.

On my first point, regarding the threat of weapons of mass destruction, the use and the threat of use of such weapons to international peace and security is and remains real. When such attacks occur, death comes in a gruesome way, and survivors have to deal with the aftermath of such attacks for the rest of their lives. The challenges and opportunities presented by scientific and technological developments also have an impact on the current situation. We feel very strongly that this aspect should not be forgotten in the Committee's work. Let me also reiterate that we fully support the ambition of the Chair to bring the number of national reports to 100 per cent, as he just mentioned.

That brings me to my second point, the importance of the mechanism to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among non-State actors. Resolution 1540 (2004) is key to addressing that threat. With its focus on the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, the resolution fills a clear gap in the international non-proliferation regime. Resolution 1540 (2004) also complements the other important work being undertaken in the area of nuclear security, such as by the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the impetus in this field that was achieved through the Nuclear Security Summit cycle. Therefore, the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) should be a priority to us all. We underline the importance of capacity-building in States that need assistance when it comes to export controls, an issue also mentioned earlier by the Chair. That issue is not only relevant for the 1540 Committee, but for many of the subsidiary organs.

Turning to my third point, the urgent need for concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), in the light of the importance of that implementation, we are pleased that agreement was finally reached this morning on a programme of work. Let me congratulate my colleague from Bolivia for that achievement. However, this is not a time to be complacent. Now we need concrete action. The Committee must continue its work effectively and efficiently in line with the measures set out in resolution 2325 (2016), especially those in paragraphs 8 and 9. Outreach towards the wider membership remains a key priority for us. In particular, we welcome the conference just mentioned by the Chair focused on Latin American and Caribbean countries, as three of the autonomous countries in our Kingdom are found there: Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

Let me conclude by reiterating our support for the important work of the 1540 Committee. It is necessary to build on the momentum created by the 2016 comprehensive review. It is only by working better together to implement the resolution, both in the Council and among the wider membership, that we can prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Peruvian presidency for holding this meeting. I also thank Ambassador Llorentty Soliz and his team for their briefing, as well as for the work done at the healm of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). The adoption today of its programme of work, which has been under discussion for some time, and the content of which needed to be commensurate with our expectations, is an important and positive development. It allows us to propose and define future activities by capitalizing on the achievements of previous years.

With the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) and all subsequent resolutions, the Security Council established the threat of the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction, in particular by non-State actors, as one of its priorities, thereby asserting its role as guarantor of the non-proliferation regime. However, that regime is now clearly threatened. It is being tested across the board by the persistent risk of a nuclear North Korea, the continuation of destabilizing ballistic activities in the Middle East and by the re-emergence of chemical weapons in Syria — where they are used by the Al-Assad regime and by Da'esh, and in Salisbury and elsewhere. Ultimately, proliferation is no longer the monopoly of a single type of actor; the risk of non-State actors getting hold of sensitive materials is a dangerous reality. That is why the 1540 Committee is more relevant than ever. In that context, to contain and halt proliferation, we must, more than ever, increase our mobilization. That is why the raison d'être of the 1540 Committee and the related resolutions are more relevant than ever.

The 1540 Committee is the architect of the action taken by all States that contribute concretely to joint efforts against proliferation. I would like to pay tribute to the Group of Experts, whose analysis and efforts to raise awareness are indispensable to the work of the

1540 Committee. The review they conducted in 2016 confirmed that. The progress in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions are tangible at the national and regional levels. However, despite the undeniable progress of recent years, much remains to be done.

Each of us must strive to calibrate our efforts to implement resolution 1540 (2004). We must all prevent and suppress the financing of proliferation. We must secure the most sensitive goods and materials in our territories, and strengthen export controls, especially against the risk of the instrumentalization of emerging technologies, which we must address. France has modernized its national counter-proliferation legal system, which now criminalizes proliferation activities and supress the funding of such activities. My country is also particularly involved in preventing the risk of the acquisition by terrorists of sensitive nuclear and radioactive material, including radioactive sources, the securing of which we would like to see strengthened. We support the steps taken by the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and those of the Group of Seven Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which we will head in 2019.

Let me highlight the importance of cooperation, assistance and interaction in all of our efforts. Because we are more effective together, we must not deploy our efforts to combat proliferation in an isolated way. On cooperation and assistance, I can assure Council members of the commitment of my delegation, which is playing the role of coordinating the Working Group on Assistance with a view to improving the effectiveness of the assistance mechanism according to the mentioned guidelines.

France attaches great importance to strengthening the regional dimension of assistance and to ensuring better alignment between the needs and the proposed assistance. The holding of regional events, like those organized by the African Union in 2016, is a recipe for success, and we must draw from that experience. We also welcome actions taken by other stakeholders that were mentioned. I take note specifically of the European Union, which, through its dynamic and ongoing awareness efforts, is helping promote cooperation.

Finally, if we are to be effective, we must also take stock of our challenges by enhancing synergies with others that share the same challenges outside of the United Nations, like the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the World Customs Organization or export control regimes and the various bodies that comprise them. I am specifically thinking of committees dealing with terrorism. These interactions are to be encouraged.

Let me state the obvious: at a time when challenges to our security are greater than ever, there is no alternative to the non-proliferation regime. France has never deviated from that position and will continue to defend it by supporting and fully contributing to the activities of the 1540 Committee.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I would like to thank Ambassador Llorentty Soliz for his briefing on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) — a landmark resolution in its day, which has become one of the pillars of the international non-proliferation architecture.

Given the ongoing and evolving threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, today's briefing reminds us of the critical importance of fully implementing resolution 1540 (2004) for the sake of international peace and security. The shocking use of chemical weapons in Iraq, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, as well as the egregious and systematic use of chemical weapons in Syria, show that the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is all too real today.

Furthermore, the continued proliferation of WMDs by irresponsible actors increases the likelihood that those heinous weapons or the capacity and knowledge to develop them will fall into the hands of non-State actors who carry out terrorist attacks. Given those persistent threats, the United States will continue to prioritize efforts to strengthen our counter-proliferation measures in line with our national security strategy and the Nuclear Posture Review. Our efforts are aimed at ensuring our security and the security of the international community in order to prevent WMD proliferation by non-State actors.

The full and universal implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is integral to achieving that goal. The United States will continue to provide strong support to a broad array of international organizations contributing to non-proliferation and provide extensive bilateral assistance to States seeking to implement their obligations under the resolution. The United

States has already provided more than $4.5 million in grants to the 1540 Trust Fund, which helps encourage States to address gaps in the implementation of their 1540 obligations. We also continue to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in our partner countries for cooperative threat reduction and other non-proliferation and export-control-related assistance programmes around the world to reduce the threat of WMDs. We commend that Chair's plan to hold a regional conference in Latin America next month. Improving implementation and exchanging best practices to strengthen national obligations across Latin America is very important. As a testament to our commitment to the region, we have helped fund a grant for the regional coordinator project of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States (OAS), which is now helping OAS members to develop 1540 national implementation action plans and will promote the implementation of the resolution.

Turning to the many tasks that lie ahead for the Committee, it is clear that the Committee must redouble its efforts to implement its programme of work to enhance the global implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). While we regret that it took nearly three months to adopt the programme of work, we are pleased that we can finally begin moving forward again. Now is the time for the Committee to address real and evolving challenges. In particular, the United States believes the Committee should prioritize four areas in the coming weeks.

First, the Committee must meet more regularly and develop a clear strategy for achieving the many elements of its programme of work. Last year, after holding one formal Committee meeting, the Chair promised to convene more meetings and get the Committee back to work. We look forward to seeing him follow through on that promise.

Secondly, since the Committee has selected new experts, it should now turn to initiating a formal process for appointing a coordinator. That will also help keep the Committee on track for continued progress. We look forward to working with the incoming experts, who are critical to helping the Committee carry out its very important mandate.

Thirdly, the Committee must also seek to develop best approaches to enforce appropriate and effective laws to implement resolution 1540 (2004), including by developing national control lists.

Finally, in 2016, the Council adopted resolution 2325 (2016) and said it would focus on the challenge of controlling access to transfers of technology and the evolving nature of the risks of proliferation due to rapid advances in science, technology and international commerce. We hope the Committee can take advantage of a wide array of civil society and industry resources to examine ways to combat those threats.

In conclusion, the United States recalls that resolution 1540 (2004), a Chapter VII resolution, is binding on all Member States. The implementation of its provisions is not optional for any Member State. In particular, in today's context, we see no greater risk of chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists than a chemical-weapons programme that is unverified and unaccounted for. For our part, the United States will continue to fully support the work of the 1540 Committee to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Equatorial Guinea is highly gratified by the holding of this meeting today. As such, it conveys its congratulations to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Mr. Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz, Permanent Representative of the Plurinational Republic of Bolivia. We would like to thank him for his leadership, dedication and efforts as Chair of that important Committee. We also thank the entire Committee and the outgoing Group of Experts for the work they have accomplished. We once again pledge the readiness of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea to work and participate actively in the Committee's tasks.

We have taken good note of the report of the Chair of the 1540 Committee on the activities carried out over the course of 2017. We welcome the Committee's progress in the submission of national implementation action plans by new States, among them Equatorial Guinea, which submitted its first action plan in 2017 to the Committee — a significant step towards achieving this goal. We note that the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is continuing its work towards the full and correct implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

I encourage the Chair of the Committee to continue divulging the implementation measures for resolution 1540 (2004). There are only 13 States left, which means we are very close to reaching universality on national action plans. In that regard, we stress the importance

of joining forces with the 1540 Committee to that end. That is why we believe it is urgent to advance this discussion.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is deeply concerned about the growing threat of terrorism and the risk of non-State actors acquiring, developing or employing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons — or trafficking them. That would bring about unforeseeable and devastating consequences for humankind. The threat to global security is real and very serious. Developed nations that have magnificent infrastructure and security forces capable of countering the terrorist threat and preventing non-State actors from using weapons of mass destruction must bear in mind that, if they do not help developing States gain access to the same type of tracking, surveillance and security infrastructure, especially at border crossings, those deficiencies could be exploited by terrorists and other non-State agents to obtain the raw materials that make it possible for them to manufacture and proliferate weapons mass destruction. Therefore, not only is it imperative for all States to spare no effort in prioritizing the adoption of measures at the national level pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), but it is also important for States, such as the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, to secure other means to enable the correct and successful implementation of the measures referred to in the resolution.

Equatorial Guinea acknowledges the significant progress that has been made by the international community in the elimination of chemical weapons. In that regard, we want to stress the need for the destruction of all categories of weapons of mass destruction, so that humankind can live without the fear of the threat posed by those weapons.

On Tuesday, 10 April, the Security Council once again showed itself unable to be effective in the conflict that the Syrian people are experiencing by not being able to give Syrian children a place to play without fear of the next bomb, not being able to give Syrian women an opportunity to go out for a walk and not being able to give the elderly and the sick an opportunity to find medicine or go to the hospital (see S/PV.8228). Is it so difficult for the Council, which is entrusted with ensuring global peace and security, to find a solution for all those people who are waiting on this decision-making organ of the United Nations? Is it so difficult to reach an agreement on an independent investigative mechanism to identify those responsible for using of chemical weapons in Syria? Syrians have suffered seven years of war, while the Second World War lasted only five years.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea encourages all parties involved in the conflict and those that have a greater or lesser influence on the country to think a bit about those Syrian children who are suffering so much as if they were our own children and grandchildren, to think of those Syrian women as if they were our wives or sisters and to think of those elderly men and women as if they were our mothers and fathers.

We must urgently work on a new consensual draft resolution to establish a new mechanism for monitoring and attributing responsibilities for the use of chemical weapons.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I thank Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Soliz for his briefing. I would also like to express my delegation's support for his further efforts in steering the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

Poland attaches great importance to its commitments on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. With full conviction, we support the implementation of legally binding instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Resolution 1540 (2004) constitutes an important complementary tool in this area, since it addresses weapons of mass destruction-related threats caused by non-State actors, which are increasing. Resolution 2325 (2016) calls upon States to take into account the evolving nature of the risk of proliferation and rapid advances in science and technology in their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Rapid technological advances in the dual-use domain continue to outpace national and international regulations. Non-State actors have become more creative in weaponizing new technologies. The use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is a dreadful reality.

Let me just mention that the Joint Investigative Mechanism attributed the use of chemical weapons also, but not only, to Da'esh. All these developments prove that resolution 1540 (2004) is not only still relevant, but the importance of its full implementation is perhaps greater than ever before.

We also believe it is possible to build synergies between the 1540 (2004) Committee and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as functional groupings, such as the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the European Union Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Proliferation Security Initiative. They all have tools to assist nations in better implementing their non-proliferation commitments.

We are pleased that the programme of work of the Committee, adopted earlier today, recognizes the need for a structured and more regular discussion based on monthly expert meetings of the Committee. We hope that such regular meetings will contribute to the revitalization of the Committee's work, as well as to further implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). We also hope that the process of selecting a new coordinator of the Group of Experts will be finalized soon, according to the established precedent.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Soliz, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), for his very informative briefing.

In the face of the rapidly increasing threat of weapons of mass destruction, the implementation of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016) is vital. Especially considering the present threats besetting us, the work of the 1540 (2004) Committee is more relevant than ever. Kazakhstan, with its principled position against the threats of weapons of mass destruction, has always supported, and will continue to support the activities of the 1540 Committee.

First, Kazakhstan will continue its tradition of allocating voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities in order to assist the Committee in ensuring States' implementation of their obligations under resolution 1540 (2004).

Secondly, we congratulate the Committee on the new composition of the Group of Experts. We wish the representatives of Peru and Côte d'Ivoire success in their new appointments as Coordinators of Working Groups I and III.

We should always keep in mind that the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, together with the rapid growth of new technologies, can evolve and increase. The Committee is being proactive and doing a lot to respond to such threats in a timely manner. In the report, in accordance with the requests made at our previous meeting, we see that a great deal of work has been done on outreach activities, which has increased the number of countries providing national reports and has increased the monitoring and technical assistance provided to States to strengthen their ability to confront the modern threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, we must not lose sight of nuclear security. My President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, during the opening ceremony of the International Atomic Energy Agency Low-Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan last August, noted the importance of the resumption of the Nuclear Security Summits, which were conducted by the United States from 2010 to 2016. We are in favour of resuming such regular high-level meetings to discuss topical issues related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Taking into account the evolving nature of the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the use by non-State actors of rapid advances in science and technology, we reiterate our initiative to establish a United Nations register on scientific developments leading to the creation and advancement of weapons of mass destruction, which would track such dangerous discoveries.

As the Council is aware, Kazakhstan has developed and promotes, with the support of the United Nations community, the code of conduct for the achievement of a world free of terrorism. Its implementation will contribute not only to the goals and work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, but also to the activities of the 1540 Committee, reflecting the importance and necessity of protecting critical facilities from the threat of terrorism. We express our support for the programme of work of the 1540 Committee for a new period and hope for its effective implementation. In its work, the Committee should help ensure that Member States' national policies and practices are consistent with the goal of completely eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Kazakhstan's firm commitment to consolidating the world community's

efforts to rid the world of WMDs. This aim must be achieved through the consistent strengthening and expansion of the non-proliferation regime, primarily within the framework of resolution 1540 (2004).

I wish to express the gratitude of my delegation for the Committee's excellent work and solid action plan and to note in particular the able leadership of its Chair, our colleague Sacha Llorenty Soliz. Our delegation wishes once again to assure the Committee of our full support for its work and readiness to actively engage in its undertakings.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would like to thank Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bolivia and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), for his briefing on the activities of the Committee charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions on weapons of mass destruction. The subject at hand today is particularly important and poignant given the recent allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

By adopting unanimously, on 28 April 2004, resolution 1540 (2004), the Council addressed the challenge of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, thus making the resolution an important part of the global security architecture. However, 14 years later, our world continues to live under the persistent threat of weapons of mass destruction, which represent a clear and present challenge to the non-proliferation regime. This very real and constantly evolving threat is of concern to the entire international community.

Of course, we welcome the significant progress made in implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions, but we must admit that a great deal remains to be done given the threat of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, particularly terrorist organizations.

Côte d'Ivoire remains extremely concerned by the risk of seeing such non-State actors develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or their means of delivery. That is why we strongly support efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, and to put in place appropriate oversight mechanisms in order to prevent their trafficking.

My delegation reaffirms the importance of international cooperation and coordination to the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), with a view to putting an end to this genuine threat to international peace and security. Moreover, it is important to ensure the effective application of and strict respect for international legal norms relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, strengthening cooperation in the areas of border controls, the monitoring of financial flows and Internet networks, and legal assistance is more necessary than ever before.

The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would also like to draw the attention of the Council and the international community to the issue of the security of the numerous stockpiles of fissile material that are not covered by any international regulation and that could be used to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. The existence of such stockpiles increases the likelihood of such substances falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

Here Côte d'Ivoire calls on Member States, with the help of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to meet their international obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

In this regard, the strengthening of national capacities, assistance and awareness-raising are important aspects of the implementation of the various international legal instruments. My delegation is of the view that the implementation of the various resolutions is a long-term goal that requires that all stakeholders involved, particularly Member States, international and regional organizations, the private sector and civil society, be vigilant and actively cooperate. States must work together in order to establish good practices that can prevent chemical agents from falling into the wrong hands.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) plays a key role in the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on non-proliferation — something that must constantly be stressed. My delegation welcomes the work done in that respect, which has enabled several Member States to submit their initial reports. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the improved cooperation between the 1540 Committee and United Nations

and non-United Nations bodies aimed at addressing non-proliferation challenges.

In that light, we call on the Committee, based on its mandate, to step up dialogue with the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations so as to share experiences and lessons learned and to identify areas of synergy that could be leveraged in order to implement resolution 1540 (2004) to the benefit of their respective member States.

Côte d'Ivoire also welcomes the second in-depth review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), conducted in 2016 and which gave rise to important recommendations. We hope that the next review, planned for 2021, will make possible significant progress in the area of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption of the 2018 programme of work by the members of the Committee, which had been a priority. For its part, Côte d'Ivoire, in its capacity as a Vice-Chair of the 1540 Committee, remains firmly committed to the strengthening of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and is prepared to make a constructive contribution to achieving the goals of the Committee, to which it once again reiterates its support.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank Ambassador Llorentty Soliz, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), for his briefing.

Last year, the 1540 Committee conducted a comprehensive review both of how States had implemented the resolution over the previous five years and of every aspect of its own work. Resolution 2325 (2016), which was adopted unanimously, established a sound foundation for the Committee's future work. Recently, the 1540 Committee has done a great deal to encourage Member States to report on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), conducting outreach and regional training and stepping up technical assistance, with positive results. China commends the efforts of the Chair of the Committee and his team.

As the first Council resolution dedicated to the issue of non-proliferation, resolution 1540 (2004) is an important part of the international non-proliferation regime. Over the years, the resolution and the Committee's work have played an important role in strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and enhancing the capacity of all States to prevent proliferation. The international non-proliferation situation continues to be challenging and demands that we all continue to improve their cooperation and their synergy.

First, we must build a political consensus and achieve shared security. All countries should subscribe to the modern concept of security, according to which we must work to achieve common, comprehensive, collaborative and sustainable security, build a security architecture that is fair and just for all and by all, create a peaceful and stable international environment and eradicate the conditions that fuel terrorism and proliferation activities as soon as possible.

Secondly, we should strengthen State responsibility and promote pragmatic cooperation. The primary responsibility for non-proliferation lies with Governments. Countries should be respected and supported in developing anti-proliferation policies in the context of their national realities and improving their non-proliferation legislation. All parties should intensify their pragmatic cooperation on non-proliferation, based on equality and mutual respect, and focus on meeting developing countries' needs by providing international assistance in this area.

Thirdly, we should maintain fair and balanced approaches and look to reach solutions through political and diplomatic means. All parties should work consistently to find political and diplomatic solutions to urgent non-proliferation-related issues. Unilateralism, double standards and discriminatory practices should be rejected so as to safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime.

Fourthly, we must comply with the resolution's mandate to the letter and conduct the Committee's work in an orderly manner. The principle of consensus should continue to prevail, and the Committee's Working Groups should function in a balanced manner, with the aim of increasing all countries' capacity to implement the resolutions and provide a solid foundation for promoting their full implementation.

China stands firmly against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We have consistently and diligently met our international non-proliferation obligations and taken an active part in international and regional non-proliferation cooperation. We are committed

to advocating for a political solution to urgent non-proliferation-related issues and support the rightful role of the United Nations in this area. As always, we stand ready to work with all parties to contribute to advancing the work of the 1540 Committee, strengthen the global governance of non-proliferation and maintain world peace and security.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Llorentty Soliz, Permanent Representative of Bolivia, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), for his briefing on the Committee's work. We thank the Ambassador of Bolivia and his delegation for their stewardship of this subsidiary body of the Security Council and for their flexibility and ability to include differing points of view in their summary documents. We also thank the entire team of the Committee's Group of Experts for its professionalism.

Combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is among the Russian Federation's military and political priorities. As with all other serious issues, it requires the concerted and coordinated efforts of all States, without exception. We are eager to find common ground with our partners so as to promote the non-proliferation agenda as quickly as possible, especially since the problems in this area continue to worsen. Resolution 1540 (2004), which Russia and the United States were instrumental in bringing about, rightly occupies a special place in the global non-proliferation architecture. It was designed to establish a robust legal and law-enforcement bulwark for preventing WMDs from falling into the hands of non-State actors, including terrorists.

The value of resolution 1540 (2004) also lies in the fact that it is a tool for cooperation rather than coercion or the extraction of services. The newer resolution, 2325 (2016), adopted as an outcome of the review process for resolution 1540 (2004), strengthens its non-proliferation potential, facilitates the exchange of best practices for its implementation and increases the effectiveness of the assistance provided to countries that need it while taking due account of their specific requirements. We believe that it is States that have the responsibility for implementing resolution 1540 (2004). International and regional organizations, industry, business, academia and scientific circles, as well as other sectors of civil society, play an important supporting role by assisting States in implementing specific provisions of this important Security Council resolution.

The resolution's institutional framework corresponds to its mandated tasks. We believe that our approach to the assessment of the operations of this Security Council subsidiary body and its Group of Experts should be a realistic one. Creating additional bureaucratic structures around 1540 Committee issues, limiting experts' contracts and advocating artificially for radical and unconsidered proposals can create additional obstacles rather than increasing the effectiveness of the Committee's work. We should therefore be guided by the principle of "first do no harm". In the light of the ongoing activity of the Islamic State and other terrorist groups in Syria that have mastered chemical-weapon technology and are making active use of it, the significance of a collective effort to suppress the heinous problem of chemical terrorism is only increasing. But it is important to work in concert while realizing that as the situation in Syria evolves, terrorists, including those who have had practical experience in the area of chemical weapons, will try to go into hiding in third countries.

For our part, we are eager to strengthen the WMD non-proliferation regime, including through the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). We stand ready to engage constructively with the Chair of the Committee and our partners.

With regard to the references made today to the Salisbury incident, I will be brief. We are waiting for information from the investigation and answers to the questions that we have asked. I am not wrong in emphasizing that we are all pretty tired of unproven statements. The same applies to eastern Ghouta, where we hope peaceful civilian life will soon be restored. The experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are investigating the allegations, and we hope that they will be permitted to do that.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Llorentty Soliz for his briefing and commending him and Bolivia for their efforts in steering the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). They deserve our praise.

Ethiopia welcomes the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions aimed at preventing the proliferation to non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We note in particular, as the Chair of the Committee indicated, that the number of States that have submitted their national reports has

reached 180, which in our view is a clear manifestation of the political commitment of States Members of the United Nations to addressing the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials.

However, we note with concern that of the 13 Member States that have yet to submit at least a first national report, 11 are in Africa. We have also noted with great concern, after a recent informal briefing by the Committee's Group of Experts, that Africa remains far behind other regions both in terms of overall implementation and of implementation in relation to the establishment of domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction, particularly with regard to controlling related materials and implementing measures in the areas of accounting, securing, physical protection, border and law enforcement, export and trade-related controls.

It is in that context that I would like to welcome the upcoming training session for points of contact for the African region, to be held in Addis Ababa in cooperation with the African Union. I would also like to reiterate our previous call for enhanced cooperation with the African Union in the implementation of the Common African Defence and Security Policy and other regional frameworks, such as the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. I would further like to encourage the Committee to strengthen its assistance framework to Member States, upon their request, with a view to addressing the implementation gaps, particularly in the area of domestic control measures, as well as in adopting and enforcing appropriate and effective laws that comprehensively address the proliferation risk caused by non-State actors, including terrorists.

It is important for the Committee to work closely with the Group of Experts to address the challenges related to the assistance framework, particularly in the areas of matchmaking, the availability and conditions of assistance for all States and the limited number of responses to requests for assistance. We have noted from the Chair's briefing that there is a plan to undertake country visits later this year with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and that the Group of Experts had a meeting with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to identify areas of collaboration. In addition, further collaboration should be envisaged between the 1540 Committee Group of Experts and members of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities. We are hopeful that this issue will be taken up by the Committee in the implementation of its programme of work for 2018.

I would like to conclude by affirming my delegation's commitment to working closely with the Chair and members of the Council to that end. I would also like to reaffirm Ethiopia's commitment to continuing taking all the measures necessary to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of non-State actors. The possibility that they may fall into terrorists' hands has always worried us. We will never refrain from doing whatever is necessary to contribute to the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions in this regard.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I would like to thank the Ambassador of Bolivia for his briefing to the Security Council today and for Bolivia's continued efforts as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We welcome the important developments in the 1540 Committee's work during 2017, which included the appointment of six new members to the Group of Experts. We are pleased that three of the new experts have already commenced their work and that the remaining three will join the Group in the coming weeks. I would also like to express my appreciation to Japan and Egypt for their contributions during their time on the Council as the coordinators of Working Groups I and III, respectively. We welcome Peru and Côte d'Ivoire as the new coordinators of those two Working Groups and look forward to working with them. They can be assured of our full support.

We hope that the appointment of the Coordinator for the Group of Experts will also be agreed on soon. I would also like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of taking gender balance into account when appointing coordinators.

Sweden remains strongly committed to strengthening the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, to which resolution 1540 (2004) is a essential complement. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to and through non-State actors is constantly evolving, and the global non-proliferation framework is under immense pressure. Again and again in recent years we have witnessed the use of chemical weapons by both State and non-State actors. In line with

the comment by the British Ambassador, this cannot be allowed to become the new normal. It is imperative that we hold perpetrators to account and show the world that the use of these weapons remains unacceptable. We must recognize the changing nature of the threat, react, adapt and step up our efforts.

I would like to reiterate once again our regret that the Council has failed to establish a new attribution mechanism for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We will continue to support efforts that aim to achieve that objective. Accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria is crucial and must be ensured.

We were pleased that the programme of work could be adopted this morning. The adoption was essential for the Committee to remain effective, and Sweden, as Vice-Chair of the Committee, thanks all Council members for their flexibility and spirit of compromise. I would also like to mention the important joint meeting that took place last year between the 1540 Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Such meetings have proved useful, and we encourage further exchanges and strengthened cooperation with other relevant Security Council Committees, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

There remains a need to highlight the risks associated with intangible transfers of technology whereby sensitive know-how may be transferred through research, industry or social media. This is an issue that we raised repeatedly during the comprehensive review in 2016. As Vice-Chair of the 1540 Committee, we are currently considering ways to further those efforts. We remain committed to contributing to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), including through the nuclear-security cooperation programme of the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority and our engagement in the Group of Seven Global Partnership Programme, where we currently co-chair the Biological Security Sub-Working Group.

As we have seen in the past few days, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security is clear and present. It is only by working together, in full support of the multilateral institutions that we have put in place, that these threats can be managed and overcome.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Ambassador Llorentty Soliz, Permanent Representative of Bolivia, for his valuable briefing and outstanding work as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), particularly those efforts aimed at preventing non-State actors' development, acquisition, production, possession, transfer or use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery. We hope today's meeting will convince Member States to step up their efforts to implement resolution 1540 (2004) as intensively as possible, so as to achieve full implementation of the resolution's provisions and universality for its very important guidelines, which represent a road map for Member States to develop national strategies and legislation designed to prevent the proliferation of these weapons to non-State actors and promote a future free of WMDs. We call on the 13 non-reporting States to submit their first reports as soon as possible. I would also like to welcome the new members of the Committee's Group of Experts. We wish them every success in their work.

The agreement reached by the members of the Council on the Committee's 2018 programme of work, after more than two months of consultations, is a clear manifestation of the important role played by the Committee's members. It highlights the sectors that are most urgently in need of attention in the light of new proliferation risks, as well as the national plans and regional visits by the Committee and its Group of Experts. It also addresses the special circumstances of certain States with regard to the implementation of measures to combat proliferation and enhance the role of civil society in combating the proliferation of WMDs.

We are all aiming to improve the performance of the 1540 Committee and its four working groups and to operationalize its mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels, which have become a fundamental part of international efforts to achieve non-proliferation. That is extremely important for the maintenance of international peace and security. The State of Kuwait is deeply concerned about the current challenges to the WMD-non-proliferation regime. The Council has already met more than four times this month to discuss the use of WMDs in more than one country. The entire international community is aware of the recent tragedies in Syria, the latest of which centres on the ongoing uncertainty about the use of such lethal weapons in Douma last Saturday.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the State of Kuwait aligns itself with the position of the League of Arab States on freeing the world from nuclear weapons

and other weapons of mass destruction, beginning in the Middle East. We are therefore eager to improve the Committee's work and performance. The State of Kuwait recently established a national point of contact with the Committee in accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 2325 (2016). We will submit our second voluntary report soon, in cooperation with the Committee's Group of Experts and its relevant Secretariat departments, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

We would first like to thank Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Soliz for his briefing on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We would like to commend his work and that of his team, and to express our strong support for the full implementation by all States of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016), especially speaking as the new Coordinator of the Working Group on monitoring and national implementation.

Peru is committed to all efforts aimed at achieving general and complete disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their delivery systems, which constitute a threat to international peace and security. We reiterate our deep concern about the threat of terrorism and the risk of non-State actors acquiring, developing, using or trafficking such weapons and their delivery systems. We believe it is essential for the international community to remain united in order to respond effectively to the serious challenges facing non-proliferation regimes, which are the most serious threats to international peace and security in the world today. It is urgent that the challenge posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic programme be addressed.

We also believe that it is crucial to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme and to strictly monitor its implementation. We would also like to stress the importance of reaching compromise in the Council concerning the unacceptable use of chemical weapons in Syria with a view to ensuring that the facts are fully investigated and that responsibility for it can be determined through an attributive mechanism.

We are also concerned about the possibility that the misuse of new scientific innovations may lead to illicit proliferation activities, particularly through illegal technology transfers and illicit financial transactions. In that regard, we want to underline the importance of ensuring that all States implement measures aimed at fulfilling all their obligations, especially those relating to internal control and export. We must all adopt effective national controls in line with resolution 2325 (2016).

Finally, we believe in the importance of the work of the 1540 Committee, particularly in responding to the risk that non-State actors, especially terrorists, may acquire chemical, biological or radiological weapons or fissile materials. Lastly, we commend the Chair's successful efforts to ensure the Committee's adoption of a programme of work, which will promote the full implementation of resolution 2325 (2016) and serve as the basis for its next comprehensive review.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8231

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8231st meeting
Friday, 13 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: The situation in the Middle East is in chaos to such an extent it has become a threat to international peace and security. The region is facing a true Gordian knot — different fault lines crossing each other and creating a highly volatile situation with risks of escalation, fragmentation and division as far as the eye can see, with profound regional and global ramifications. We see a multiplicity of divides.

The first is the memory of the Cold War. But, to be precise, it is more than a simple memory: the Cold War is back with a vengeance — but with a difference. The mechanisms and the safeguards to manage the risks of escalation that existed in the past no longer seem to be present.

Secondly, there is the Palestinian-Israeli divide.

Thirdly, there is the Sunni-Shia divide, evident from the Gulf to the Mediterranean. It is important to note that apparent religious divides are normally the result of political or geostrategic manipulation.

Finally, there is a wide range of different factors — from opposing attitudes in relation to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood or the status of the Kurds, to the dramatic threats to communities that have been living in the region for millenniums and are part of the rich diversity of Middle Eastern societies.

Those numerous divisions are reflected in a multiplicity of conflicts with different degrees of interconnection, several of which are clearly linked to the threat of global terrorism. Many forms of escalation are possible.

We see the wounds of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continuing to fester. The recent violence in Gaza resulted in many needless deaths and injuries. I repeat my call for an independent and transparent investigation into those incidents. I also appeal to those concerned to refrain from any act that could lead to further casualties, in particular any measures that could place civilians in harm's way. That tragedy underlines the urgency of revitalizing the peace process for a two-State solution that will allow Palestinians and Israelis to live side by side in peace in two democratic States within secure and recognized borders. I reaffirm the readiness of the United Nations to support those efforts.

In Yemen, we are witnessing the worst humanitarian disaster in today's world. There is only one pathway to ending the Yemeni conflict and to addressing the humanitarian crisis: a negotiated political settlement through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue. My Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, is doing everything possible to facilitate that political settlement. He will brief the Council next week.

In Libya, I encourage all parties to continue to work with my Special Representative, Ghassan Salamé, as he engages in the political process with a broad range of Libyan interlocutors across the country in order to implement the United Nations action plan. It is high time to end the Libyan conflict.

The case of Iraq demonstrates that progress is possible with concerted local, regional and global commitment. With the defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, having overcome the risk of fragmentation, the Government of Iraq must now focus on reconstruction, reforms and reconciliation. I hope that the upcoming elections will consolidate that progress.

At the recent Paris and Rome conferences, the international community reaffirmed its support for Lebanon's sovereignty, stability and State security institutions. It is absolutely essential to prevent a new Israel-Hizbullah conflict, which could inevitably result in many more victims and much greater destruction than the last war. I reiterate the critical importance to act on key principles and commitments on Lebanon, including the Security Council resolutions, such as resolution 1701 (2006), and the policy of disassociation. The dangers of the links to the Syrian conflict are

evident in the recent confrontations between Iran and Israel in Syria.

Syria today indeed represents the most serious threat to international peace and security. We see there confrontations and proxy wars, involving several national armies, a number of armed opposition groups, many national and international militia, foreign fighters from everywhere in the world and various terrorist organizations. From the beginning, we have witnessed systematic violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international law, in general, in utter disregard for the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

For eight long years, the people of Syria have endured suffering upon suffering. I reiterate that there is no military solution to the conflict. The solution must be political through the Geneva intra-Syrian talks, as stipulated in resolution 2254 (2015), and in line with the consistent efforts of my Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura. Syrians have lived through a litany of horrors: atrocity crimes, sieges, starvation, indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, the use of chemical weapons, forced displacement, sexual violence, torture, detention and enforced disappearances. The list goes on.

In a moment of hope, the Security Council adopted resolution 2401 (2018), demanding that all parties cease hostilities without delay for a durable humanitarian pause. Unfortunately, no such cessation of hostilities ever really took place. That is the bleak panorama of Syria today.

In that panorama, I am outraged by the continued reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. I reiterate my strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by any party to the conflict under any circumstances. Their use is abhorrent and a clear violation of international law. The seriousness of the recent allegations requires a thorough investigation, using impartial, independent and professional expertise.

In that regard, I reaffirm my full support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its Fact-finding Mission in undertaking the required investigation into those allegations. The mission should be granted full access, without any restrictions or impediments, to perform its activities. I take note that the Syrian Government has requested that and is committed to facilitating it. The first OPCW team is already in Syria; a second team is expected today or tomorrow.

However, we need to go further. In a letter to the Council two days ago, I expressed, following the end of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism,

> "my deep disappointment that the Security Council was unable to agree upon a dedicated mechanism to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria".

I want to repeat today that the norms against chemical weapons must be upheld. As I wrote in the same letter:

> "[e]nsuring accountability for a confirmed use of chemical weapons is our responsibility, not least to the victims of such attacks. A lack of accountability emboldens those who would use such weapons by providing them with the reassurance of impunity. This, in turn, further weakens the norm proscribing the use of chemical weapons and the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture as a whole. I urge all Member States to act responsibly in these dangerous circumstances;
>
> "I appeal to the Security Council to fulfil its duties and not to give up on efforts to agree upon a dedicated, impartial, objective and independent mechanism for attributing responsibility with regard to the use of chemical weapons. I stand ready to support such efforts."

The increasing tensions and the inability to reach a compromise in the establishment of an accountability mechanism threaten to lead to a full-blown military escalation. In my contacts with the members of the Security Council, particularly the permanent members, I have reiterated my deep concerns about the risks of the current impasse and stressed the need to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control.

That is exactly the risk that we face today — that things spiral out of control. It is our common duty to stop it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are greatful to the Secretary-General for his briefing. His participation, his assessments and his authoritative words about the situation that has developed are very significant. We agree with him that there are many wounds in the Middle East. However, most important, currently the deepest wound is the situation in Syria, insofar as any negative repercussions would have major global implications.

Two days ago, news of a threat by the United States to launch missile strikes against the Syrian Arab Republic ricocheted around the world. The Russian Federation was also warned to prepare for strikes. Let me point out that our military is in Syria at the invitation of its legitimate Government in order to combat international terrorism. We continue to see dangerous military preparations for an illegal act of force against a sovereign State in violation of the norms of international law. It is not just the use of force but even the threat of it that flies in the face of the Charter of the United Nations, and that is precisely what we are seeing in the most recent statements and actions of Washington and its allies. The bellicose rhetoric is being ratcheted up at every level, including at the very top. Additional forces and assets of the United States military and its allies are bearing down on the Syrian coast. It feels as though Washington is singlemindedly heading towards unleashing a military scenario against Syria. That cannot be permitted. Such developments would be fraught with terrible consequences for global security, especially considering that a Russian military contingent is deployed in Syria.

There are also those who have been observing these risky preparations with tacit approval, declaring that they understand Washington's motives or engaging in direct incitement, thereby becoming potential accomplices in an act of reckless military adventurism. There are people in the Security Council who love to talk about preventive diplomacy. Right now, for some reason, they are nowhere to be seen or heard. The guilty parties have been speedily identified not just before any investigation has been conducted but even before it has been established whether the incident in question took place at all, but evidently they must still be punished. Someone will have to answer for these unfortunate developments and for the previous interventions that have engulfed many countries in years of crisis with untold casualties.

Witness the recent experience of Iraq and Libya, which, among other things, shows that the attitude of America's leaders to the Security Council is largely one of convenience. They need it as cover for their Iraqi test tubes and Libyan no-fly zones. What they are presenting us with now is another virtual test tube, and an empty one. The reckless behaviour of the United States as it tramples on international law and State sovereignty is unworthy of its status as a permanent member of the Security Council, which presupposes the highest possible degree of responsibility and certainly not a right to sabre rattling, a right that is unknown in international law.

Why does the United States continue to torture the Middle East, provoking one conflict after another and pitting the States of the region against one another? Who will benefit from a potential strike against the Syrian military, which is taking the brunt of the fight against terrorism and achieving major victories in it? We know for sure that the ringleaders of the Syrian armed groups were given orders to launch an offensive after a possible military action. Is this latest wave of chaos really being unleashed just for that?

The excuse is the alleged use of toxic substances in the Syrian town of Douma on 7 April, for which there has been no reliable confirmation. Our specialists found no trace of the use of toxic substances. The residents of Douma know of no such attack. All the evidence of the alleged attack has been provided by anti-Government forces for whom this development is in their interests. We have good reason — indeed, we have information — leading us to believe that what took place was a provocation with the participation of various countries' intelligence services. We have been issuing warnings about this for a long time. It is a repeat of the Khan Shaykhun scenario in April of last year.

The Syrian Government, for which this is clearly the last thing it needs, has said that it was not involved and has sent a request for an immediate inspection by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) of the location of the alleged incident. It has offered security guarantees jointly with the Russian military. The mission is already getting started on its work in Syria and we hope that it will be able to conduct a truly independent and impartial investigation.

Only the Security Council has the authority at the international level to decide what measures to take and against whom in connection with the use of chemical

weapons in Syria. Russia will continue to work diligently and systematically to de-escalate the recent tensions in international relations. We proposed adopting a brief resolution in support of the OPCW inspection mission in Douma that the United States, Britain and France irresponsibly blocked, thereby demonstrating their lack of interest in an investigation. The only thing they care about is overthrowing the Syrian Government and, more broadly, deterring the Russian Federation. This has been clearly visible in other international and domestic political events built on unfounded hoaxes and conspiracy theories that always centre around the Russian Federation.

What is the United States trying to achieve? After many years of internecine strife in Syria, significant areas of the country have been stabilized. The political process is reviving and indicators of national reconciliation are emerging. The terrorists have been dealt a significant blow. We have never denied that the United States has also made a certain contribution to achieving that shared goal, but it has always kept certain types of terrorists in reserve for its fight against the so-called regime and for advancing its geopolitical priorities in the region.

My British colleague is always asking me what Russia is doing to implement resolution 2401 (2018). My answer is that my country is practically the only one that is doing anything about it. Over the course of the Astana process, peace has been restored in more than 2,500 towns and villages. That does not mean that they have become victims of the regime, as the United States calls it, merely that with the help of Russia and other guarantors they have established normal relations with the central authorities in Damascus. With the support of the United Nations, the Syrian National Dialogue Congress was held successfully in Sochi. How many towns and villages has the United States brought peace to? How many groups has it persuaded to join the ceasefire agreements?

In order to break the deadlock in the situation in eastern Ghouta after the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), complex negotiations were conducted with the leaders of armed groups, with Russian assistance. The militias and their family members were safely evacuated from the district, and civilians were finally given the opportunity to shake off years of terror. Film of their genuine joy exists, but the Western media is not showing it. The United States does not care about the fate of the prisoners of the militias in eastern Ghouta who had been supporters of the Syrian Government. When they were bargaining with the Syrian authorities to exchange prisoners, the militias claimed that they were holding between 2,000 and 4,000 people. Now it turns out that there are far fewer. People died from harsh treatment and hard labour digging huge tunnels for their torturers.

Some members have grieved to see their bearded pilgrims setting off for Syria on free tourist tickets. They lost no opportunity to shriek from every street corner about the plight of the hundreds of thousands of people in besieged eastern Ghouta. Now those people need help in rebuilding normal lives, but these Council members have already lost interest because the area is under Government control. Now there will have to be unpleasant discussions about the blockade of Fo'ah and Kefraya. When was the last time a humanitarian convoy was there? When was the last time Council members even asked about it? Someone must answer for the coalition's destruction of Raqqa.

These are dangerous developments, with far-reaching ramifications for global security. In this instance, responsibility lies entirely with the United States and its allies. It is a pity that Old Europe continues to lose face. We call on the leaders of these States to immediately reconsider, return to the international legal fold and not to lead the world to the dangerous brink. We urgently need to find a peaceful way out through a collective effort. The Russian Federation is ready to cooperate equitably with all partners and to solve the problems that may arise through dialogue. We will continue to focus on finding a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Syria based on established international law. We will continue to work actively to that end, and we call on all our partners to do the same.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I started to listen to my Russian friend so as to respond to him, but instead I am truly in awe of his ability to say what he said with a straight face.

Today's meeting of the Security Council has been convened under truly strange circumstances. The Russian Federation has asked us to discuss what it calls unilateral threats related to Syria. What is strange is that Russia is ignoring the real threat to international peace and security that has brought us all here. It is ignoring its own unilateral responsibility for all of it. What we should discuss today is the use of deadly chemical weapons to murder innocent Syrian

civilians. That is one of the most blatant and grotesque violations of international law in the world today. It is a violation of all standards of morality. It violates the long-standing international consensus that chemical weapons represent a unique evil. Chlorine, mustard gas and other chemical weapons killed 90,000 people and injured more than 1 million during the First World War. In the history *Canada in the Great World War*, the Canadian soldier A.T. Hunter described it this way.

> "The gas cloud gathered itself like a wave and ponderously lapped over into the trenches. Then passive curiosity turned to active torment — a burning sensation in the head, red-hot needles in the lungs, the throat seized by a strangler. Many fell and died on the spot. The others, gasping, stumbling with faces contorted, hands widely gesticulating and uttering hoarse cries of pain, fled madly through the villages and farms and through the city itself, carrying panic to the remnants of the civilian population and filling the roads with fugitives of both sexes and all ages".

Chemical weapons did not produce the most casualties in the First World War, but they were the most feared. In the Second World War chemical weapons were employed on an industrial scale against civilians, resulting in the worst genocide in human history, which the United States recalled just yesterday on Holocaust Remembrance Day. That is what brings us here today. That is what chemical weapons are all about. That is why we must not stay silent in the face of the horrible use of chemical weapons in our own time.

The first response to all of this death and injury was the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which banned the use of chemical weapons and more. Later, in 1993, the Chemical Weapons Convention was signed. It obligates all of its parties to never under any circumstances

> "develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone".

It also prohibits all parties from helping anyone to engage in such activities. The United States is a party to the Convention. Russia is a party to the Convention. Every country that is currently a member of the Security Council is a party to the Convention. Even the Al-Assad regime has pledged to abide by the Convention, so in theory all of us agree on the core principle at stake today. No country can by allowed to use chemical weapons with impunity. Now that we have established what we all agree on, let us ask ourselves what we should be condemning today. We should be discussing the actions that truly brought us to this moment in time. We should not be condemning the country or group of countries that might have the courage to stand up in defence of our common principle against the use of chemical weapons. Instead, we should be condemning the country that has unilaterally prevented the Security Council from upholding it.

Which member of the Council most exhibits unilateralism with regard to chemical weapons? It is Russia alone that has stopped at nothing to defend the Syrian regime's multiple instances of the use of chemical weapons. It is Russia alone that killed the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which enabled the world to ensure accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is Russia alone that has used its veto six times to prevent the condemnation of Al-Assad's use of chemical weapons. It is Russia alone that has used its veto 12 times to protect the Al-Assad regime. To make matters worse, it was Russia alone that agreed to be the guarantor of the removal of all chemical weapons in Syria. If Russia had lived up to its commitment, there would be no chemical weapons in Syria and we would not be here today. That is the Russian record of unilateralism. It is a record that has led to the trashing of all international standards against the use of chemical weapons. This meeting should not be about so-called unilateral threats, but rather about the multiple actions that Russia has taken to bring us to this point.

Our President has not yet made a decision about possible actions in Syria, but should the United States and its allies decide to act in Syria, it will be in defence of a principle on which we all agree. It will be in defence of a bedrock international norm that benefits all nations. Let us be clear. Al-Assad's most recent use of poison gas against the people of Douma was not his first, second, third or even forty-ninth use of chemical weapons. The United States estimates that Al-Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war at least 50 times. Public estimates are as high as 200.

In the weeks after Al-Assad's sarin-gas attack last April, which killed nearly 100 people, including many children, the regime used chlorine gas at least once and possibly as many as three times in the same area. Last November, just as the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism expired, the regime again attacked its people with sarin in the Damascus suburbs.

In January, Al-Assad used at least four chlorine-filled rockets in Douma, and then he struck again last weekend. Thanks to Russia, there was no United Nations body to determine blame. But we know who did this; our allies know who did this. Russia can complain all it wants about fake news, but no one is buying its lies and its coverups. Russia was supposed to guarantee that Al-Assad would not use chemical weapons, and Russia did the opposite.

The world must not passively accept the use of chemical weapons after almost a century of their prohibition. Everything the United Nations stands for is being blatantly defied in Syria, with the help of a permanent member of the Council. All nations and all peoples will be harmed if we allow Al-Assad to normalize the use of chemical weapons. It is those who act to violate the prohibition of chemical weapons who deserve our condemnation. Those who act to defend it deserve our support. The United States and its allies will continue to stand up for truth, accountability, justice and an end to the use of chemical weapons.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and deeply appreciate his tireless efforts on the issue of the Middle East and that of Syria.

The current situation in Syria is perilous. The country is at the crossroads of war and peace, and China is following the developments there with great concern. The possibility of an escalation of tensions worries us deeply. The pressing priority of the moment is to launch a comprehensive, objective and impartial investigation into the relevant incidents in order to arrive at authoritative conclusions.

China has consistently stood in favour of the peaceful settlement of disputes and opposed the routine use or threat of force in international relations. To take unilateral military action by circumventing the Security Council is inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and runs counter to the basic norms enshrined in international law and those governing international relations.

Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity must be fully respected. We call on the parties concerned to remain calm, exercise restraint, refrain from any move that could lead to further escalation of the situation and resolve the issue peacefully through consultation and dialogue. China is convinced that there can be no military solution to the Syrian issue; the only way out is a political settlement. China supports the United Nations in playing an active role in safeguarding the authority and standing of the Organization and its Security Council.

China calls on the international community to steadfastly continue its diplomatic efforts, tirelessly stay the course so as to settle the Syrian issue politically, give full play to the role of the United Nations as the main mediator, and resolve without delay the Syrian issue comprehensively, justly and adequately, in keeping with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The people of the world yearn for peace and oppose war. The situation in Syria has ramifications for peace and stability in the Middle East and the world at large, as well as for the credibility and authority of the Council. At this critical juncture, the Council must rightfully discharge its sacred responsibility emanating from the Charter of the United Nations; act in line with the dictates of our times; build unity and consensus and do its utmost to maintain peace; leave no stone unturned in its efforts to prevent war; and live up to the trust and expectations of the international community.

China is and has always been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of the international order. China stands ready to continue its unflagging efforts to safeguard peace and stability in the Middle East and the world at large, in a spirit of responsibility to history and to the peoples of the world.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

We are meeting today to address the threats to international peace and security that have arisen as a result of the situation in Syria, six days after the latest chemical-weapons carnage, on 7 April in Douma.

For seven years, the situation in Syria has without a doubt constituted a grave threat to international peace and security as defined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council itself characterized this as such unanimously on 27 September 2013, when resolution 2118 (2013) was adopted in the wake of the appalling chemical-weapons attacks that had taken place in eastern Ghouta. The world then learned for the first time and with horror of the symptoms of large-scale chemical-weapons-related deaths in Syria.

To counter those who are seeking to sow confusion, going so far as to accuse the Syrian people of having gassed themselves; those who are suggesting conspiracy theories; those who are endeavouring methodically to destroy our mechanisms for action on chemical weapons in Syria, we must come back to simple facts. Yes, the Syrian crisis represents a threat to international peace and security. This threat is related to the repeated, organized and systematic use of chemical weapons by the Bashar Al-Assad regime, which once again reached new levels of horror with the two attacks perpetrated in Douma on 7 April last. Those attacks claimed the lives of at least several dozen people and wounded hundreds of others. Many of the injured will continue to suffer throughout their lives from the serious respiratory and neurological aftereffects of the chemicals used.

There is no doubt once again as to the responsibility of Damascus for this attack. The facts collected on the ground, the symptoms of the victims, the complexity of handling of the substances used, and the determination of the regime's forces to subjugate the last pockets of resistance in Douma as expeditiously as possible and using every means at their disposal, all point to this.

This is a well-known and documented modus operandi, given that an independent mechanism, created at the initiative of the Security Council, had already established at least four times since 2015 that chemical weapons had been used by the Damascus regime in Sarmin, Talmenes, Qmenas and Khan Shaykun — an investigative mechanism that a permanent member of the Security Council decided last November to force into silence.

The chemical-weapons policy of the Bashar Al-Assad regime is among the most serious violations of all the norms that guarantee our collective security. It is first and foremost a violation of all international obligations relating to the prohibition of chemical weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Syria is a party.

Secondly, it constitutes a violation of the very foundations of international humanitarian law, namely, the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality.

Thirdly, it constitutes a breach of successive Security Council resolutions: resolutions 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015) and therefore a breach of the obligations incumbent upon Syria under the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, the use of chemical weapons against civilians, which was banned in 1925 under the Geneva Protocol, constitutes a war crime under the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The Secretary-General in August 2013 called the use of chemical weapons a crime against humanity. That chemical war is a tool to accelerate a deliberate policy of submission by terror, which, in seven years, has caused the deaths of 400,000 people, the deliberate destruction of civilian and health infrastructure in entire regions, a massive exodus of refugees and displaced persons and has fuelled international terrorism. This frightening picture is that of one of the most blatant threats to international peace and security in the contemporary era. It is also the record of those who, against all odds, continue to support it.

I will once again have to state the obvious: if Syria has continued to use toxic substances for military purposes, it is because it has retained the capacity to use and manufacture them, in contravention of its international commitments, of the guarantees provided by Russia in the framework of the 2013 Russian-American agreement and of Security Council resolutions.

It has already been several years since the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) informed us of the major remaining doubts about the sincerity of Syria's initial declaration to the organization in 2013. Many of the OPCW's questions and requests for documents have gone unanswered. Syria has never provided a satisfactory explanation for the inspectors' discovery of substances and capabilities that Syria had never declared. We saw those capabilities again in action on 7 April, used to kill as many civilians as possible and terrorize the survivors to consolidate the definitive takeover of Douma by the Syrian regime.

Beyond Syria, the prevailing impunity since 2013 affects the entire chemical non-proliferation regime, and with it the entire security system that we have collectively built since the Second World War. It is that collective security legacy, built to protect future generations from the outbreaks of violence in the two global conflicts, that the members of the Security Council have been mandated to protect. To allow the normalization of the use of chemical weapons without reacting is to let the genie out of the bottle. That would be a terrible setback to international order, for which we would all pay the price.

The Security Council, to which the Charter of the United Nations entrusts the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the entire international community, is therefore more than justified in meeting today. It is more than justified for the Council to note, once again, the violation of international law and its own resolutions, and the persistence of a proven threat to international peace and security. It is more than justified to urgently re-establish a mechanism for attributing responsibility for chemical attacks — that opportunity was given to the Council in vain, once again, on Tuesday (see S/PV.8228) with the American draft resolution (S/2018/321).

The Council is more than justified in doing what it has committed itself to do, that is, to take measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. But in the face of the mass atrocities committed in Syria, the Council's action has been paralysed for several years by successive Russian vetoes. Russia vetoed 12 draft resolutions on Syria, including six on the chemical issue alone. Those vetoes had no other objective than to protect the Syrian authorities — to guarantee a regime of impunity, in defiance of all international standards. To allow the indefensible, Russia has deliberately chosen to sacrifice the ability of the Council to act, the most important tool of our collective security. We had proof of that again last Tuesday.

On 7 April, Douma joined Ypres, Halabja and Khan Shaykhun in the litany of chemical massacres. I solemnly say that, in deciding to once again use chemical weapons, the regime reached a point of no return on 7 April. France will assume its responsibility to put an end to an intolerable threat to our collective security and to finally ensure respect for international law and the measures taken for years by the Security Council.

A chemical attack like that of Douma, which consists in gassing the last inhabitants of a besieged enclave — even when it is about to fall, even when the last fighters are negotiating their surrender — is the height of cynicism. That is where we are after seven years of the regime's war against its people. This is the situation to which the world must provide a firm, united and resolute response. That is our responsibility today.

It will also be essential to combat impunity for those responsible for the use of such weapons and, more broadly, for those who are responsible for the most serious crimes committed in Syria. France is fully committed to that endeavour. That is the purpose of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which we initiated last January. We will also continue to support and assist all international mechanisms in their work to investigate the most serious crimes committed against civilians in Syria.

In addition to the chemical issue, continuing violations of international humanitarian law must cease without delay. We ourselves demanded it by unanimously adopting resolution 2401 (2018) — thwarted the day after its adoption by the resumption of bombardments by the regime with the active support of its allies, including those within the Council who had subscribed to the truce. Resolution 2401 (2018) has lost none of its relevance, quite the contrary — full and unhindered humanitarian access to help populations in distress must be implemented throughout the territory. It is essential and urgent that humanitarian convoys can reach eastern Ghouta safely and that civilians fleeing hostilities or in need of medical treatment can be protected.

Finally, we can only sustainably resolve the Syrian crisis within the framework of a political solution and on the basis of the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). Only under those conditions can put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people, eradicate terrorism and work together for the stability of the Middle East. We have been calling for a political solution for seven years. May those who join us today in their concern about the consequences of the Syrian crisis finally force the regime to accept negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations.

We cannot allow the most fundamental values and standards of humanity, such as those emanating from the Charter of the United Nations, be thwarted and flouted in front of our eyes without reacting. Those values and standards must be defended and protected. That is the reason behind our commitment — to restore the complete ban on chemical weapons set in stone within international conventions, and thereby consolidate the rule of law. It is the responsibility of those who believe, like France, in effective multilateralism led by a respected United Nations.

We must stop the Syrian chemical escalation. We cannot allow a country to simultaneously defy the Council and international law. The ability of Damascus to violate all our norms constitutes a threat to international security. Let us put an end to it.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): The Secretary-General has presented a catalogue of danger in the Middle East, including Gaza, Yemen and Iraq. It is no disrespect to those issues that today, like other speakers, I will concentrate on Syria. The United Kingdom will be ready to put its shoulder to the wheel on those other issues when the time comes.

The situation we face today and the reason we are in the Security Council today arise wholly and solely from the use of chemical weapons on the Syrian people, most probably by the Syrian regime — not just once, but consistently and persistently over the past five years. The highest degree of responsibility, to quote the Russian Ambassador, is indeed what the Council, and in particular its five permanent members, are for, and it is our duty to uphold.

The British Cabinet met recently and concluded that the Al-Assad regime has a track record of the use of chemical weapons and that it is highly likely the regime is responsible for Saturday's attack. This is a further example of the erosion of international law in relation to the use of chemical weapons, as my French and American colleagues have set out, and it is deeply concerning. But more important than that, the use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. The British Cabinet has agreed on the need to take action to alleviate humanitarian distress and to deter the further use of chemical weapons by the Al-Assad regime. To that end, we will continue to work with our friends and allies to coordinate an international response.

The Secretary-General mentioned the Cold War. Of course, the Cold War was bracketed by East-West cooperation. We have been on the same side as Russia. In April 1945, Russia liberated Vienna as part of our joint efforts to bring peace to Europe. In 1995, it passed the Dayton Accords at part of our joint efforts to bring peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina. But in 2018 the Russians refuse to work with us to bring peace to Syria.

Instead, since the first attack on Ghouta and chemical-weapons use, in 2013, the Joint Investigative Mechanism has ascribed two uses of mustard gas to Da'esh, three uses of chlorine to the Syrian regime and one use of sarin to the Syrian regime before the latest attack. As my French colleague has set out, the United Kingdom, the United States and France are members in good standing of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are members and supporters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Fact-finding Mission. In the debates in the Security Council earlier this week, we would have dispatched an investigative mission, had Russia and Bolivia not blocked that effort (see S/PV.8228).

Syria is the latest pernicious chronology of Russia's disregard for international law and disrespect for the international institutions we have built together to keep us collectively safe. This is revealed in actions over Georgia 10 years ago, over Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 and over the attack in Salisbury, which we will return to next week.

Let me repeat what I said in the Security Council last week. My Government and the British people are not Russophobic. We have no quarrel with the Russian people. We respect Russia as a country. We prefer a productive relationship with Russia, but it is Russia's own actions that have led to this situation.

What has taken place in Syria to date is in itself a violation of the United Nations Charter. No purpose or principle of the Charter is upheld or served by the use of chemical weapons on innocent civilians. On the contrary: to stand by and ignore the requirements of justice, accountability and the preservation of the non-proliferation regime is to place all our security — not just that of the Syrian people — at the mercy of a Russian veto. We will not sacrifice the international order we have collectively built to the Russian desire to protect its ally at all costs.

The Russian Ambassador set out what Russia is doing on the ground in Syria. He thought that might be inconvenient for me to hear. However, it is not inconvenient for me to point out that Russia has given $5.5 million to the United Nations appeal. The United Kingdom has given a $160 million, and this is part of a contribution totalling $3.5 billion in all. It is not inconvenient for me to say that; it may be inconvenient for the Russian Ambassador to hear it.

The Russian Ambassador also asked why we were not joining in and trying to stabilize actions in Syria and bring about peace. We have tried. Indeed, we have tried very hard to support Staffan de Mistura in getting the Geneva political process under way, and we shall continue to so. But we do not join Russia, because, sadly, its efforts have not been to try and restart the Geneva process. Instead, their efforts have been to support Syria in the use of chemical weapons and the

bombardment of the Syrian people. In the area known as I-4, they helped the regime liberate this area but they took their eye off the ball and Da'esh took it back. They took it again, but, sadly, foreign fighters have been able to re-establish themselves there. This is not de-escalation. This is not political progress. This is a gross distortion by Russia of what is actually happening on the ground.

The circumstances that we face today are truly exceptional. My colleagues from the United States and France have set out in great detail the catalogue of awful things that are happening to the Syrian people. That catalogue goes to the heart of what the Geneva Conventions, the non-proliferation regime, the United Nations and the Security Council are for. It is not only dangerous what Russia is doing in vetoing our resolutions and in supporting the Syrian regime's actions against its own people. It is ultimately prejudicial to our security. Indeed, it will let Da'esh re-establish itself. It is something that we believe we need to take action to defend.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today, for his efforts and for his good offices.

Last weekend, reports once again began to emerge of horrifying allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, this time in Douma, with reports of a large number of civilian casualties. Like many others, we were alarmed by these extremely serious allegations, and we called for an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation to establish the facts. In that regard, we welcome the fact that the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which we fully support, has been deployed to Syria. Full access and cooperation by all parties must now be ensured.

I want to reiterate once more that Sweden will spare no effort to combat the use and proliferation of chemical weapons by State or non-State actors anywhere in the world. We unequivocally condemn in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons, including in Syria. It is a serious violation of international law, it constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and their use in armed conflict is a war crime. The international disarmament and non-proliferation regime must be safeguarded, which is best achieved through true multilateralism and broad international consensus.

We share the outrage and the frustration of many in this Chamber about chemical-weapons use in Syria. Those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable. We cannot accept impunity.

The conflict in Syria is in its eighth year, and we are at a dangerous moment. We fully share the deep concern expressed by the Secretary-General about the risks of the current impasse and the need to avoid the situation escalating and spiralling out of control and to pay further attention to the divides, tensions and fault lines in the region, as described again by the Secretary-General this morning.

We remain deeply disappointed that the Security Council has been unable to agree and move forward on a substantial, swift, and unified response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We deeply regret that Russia once again used its veto and blocked the Council from taking action this week (see S/PV.8228). Over the past few days, we have tried to ensure that all peaceful means to respond have seriously been considered. We are working tirelessly to ensure that no stone is left unturned in efforts to find a way forward in the Security Council. The Secretary-General offered to support such efforts through his good offices, which is an opportunity that should be seized. That is why yesterday we circulated yet another proposal that asks for four things.

First, it condemns in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons in Syria and expresses alarm at the alleged incident in Douma last weekend, because the use of chemical weapons constitutes a serious violation of international law.

Secondly, it demands full access and cooperation for the OPCW Fact-finding Mission, because we need facts and evidence about what happened in Douma last weekend.

Thirdly, it expresses the Council's determination to establish a new impartial, objective and independent attribution mechanism based on a proposal by the Secretary-General, because the perpetrators of chemical-weapons attacks must be identified and held to account, and, to that end, we need a new mechanism.

Fourthly, it requests the Secretary-General to dispatch immediately a high-level disarmament mission to Syria because we need to resolve all outstanding issues on chemical weapons and rid Syria once and for all possible chemical weapons that might still exist in

the country. Such a mission would add political and diplomatic leverage to the necessary technical and professional work of the OPCW. We therefore call on all members of the Council to muster the political will and respond to the appeal by the Secretary-General so as to come together and move forward.

The use of chemical weapons is a grave threat to international peace and security. It is indeed deplorable that the Council has not yet been able to come together and agree on a timely and firm response. Even though the use of chemical weapons in itself violates international law, any response must comply with international law and respect the Charter of the United Nations. The time has now come to urgently revert to a political process under United Nations auspices for a political solution in line with resolution 2254 (2015), and for Syria and the Astana guarantors to move forward without further delay and live up to their commitments so that resolution 2401 (2018), which demands the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access, can be fully and urgently implemented. That is the only way to end to the suffering of the Syrian people and end the brutal seven-year-long conflict.

We firmly believe that there is a way for the Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter. We believe that there continues to be a way for the Council to come together. We believe that we need to ensure that we have exhausted every peaceful effort and every diplomatic option to stop further atrocities from being carried out in Syria, hold those responsible to account, come to terms once with the chemical-weapons issue in Syria, cease hostilities and find a political solution.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for having illustrated for us the chaotic and dangerous situation currently prevailing in the Middle East by providing a detailed overview of every one of the conflicts in that vulnerable region, from Libya to the desolate and devastating crisis in Syria, which, as all evidence suggests, runs the imminent risk of dramatically deteriorating.

In line with the statement of the Secretary-General, we reaffirm Equatorial Guinea's firm belief that in confronting such situations we must always have recourse to dialogue and establish and respect mechanisms intended for achieving the peaceful settlement of conflicts until such options are exhausted. A unilateral military response could be counterproductive, and, far from solving the problem, it would lead to more suffering and chaos than already present, as the Secretary-General indicated — and additional disorder as in case of Libya, with which we are well familiar in Africa, and the consequences of which affect the entire Sahel region and part of Central Africa. We stand categorically against the use of force with the sole exception that it be justified under the conditions set forth under the Charter of the United Nations Charter and that it be used as a last resort after all other means have been exhausted.

We are concerned about the rhetoric that is being used. It sounds dangerously familiar to us, and we do not like where it might lead us. We appeal to Governments' sense of responsibility, and in particular to the permanent members of the Security Council, as we believe that they have the additional responsibility of defending the relevance of the Council.

We would like to ask the following questions. Who benefits from the inability of the Security Council to make decisions? Are we contributing to delegitimizing the Council? Are we actively eroding the Council's relevance in the international political arena? If the Council is unable to take action, how long will it take before the international community withdraws its faith, hope and trust in the Council?

There is no military solution to the Syrian issue. We must therefore continue to look for ways to solve the problem through diplomatic channels. All Council members must act responsibly and agree to establish an independent and impartial monitoring mechanism to ascertain what took place in Douma and ensure accountability and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

The Secretary-General stated his disappointment with the Council's failure to establish a mechanism that would identify and attribute responsibility to those using chemical weapons. We could not agree more with that statement. Only a few days ago, our delegation stated its frustration when the Council failed to adopt three draft resolution put to the vote (see S/PV.8228). The Secretary-General's offer concerning his good offices must be considered, and we must provide him with that opportunity.

In conclusion, we reiterate the position of Equatorial Guinea in arguing against and condemning

the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction regardless of who uses them.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. We welcome the presence of the Secretary-General among us. His assessments are always very precise and useful, and we thank him for the intensive work that he is doing for the benefit of upholding the purposes and principles of the Organization.

For some reason, some members of the Security Council are avoiding addressing the main reason for convening this meeting, which is that one State Member has threatened the unilateral use of force in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Much has been said about the use of chemical weapons, and Bolivia would like to make clear its total and absolute condemnation of the use of chemical weapons or the use of chemical agents as weapons as unjustifiable and criminal acts wherever, whenever and by whomever they are committed. For their use is a grave crime under international law and against the interests of international peace and security. Those responsible for committing those terrible and criminal acts must be identified, investigated, prosecuted and punished. We demand a transparent and impartial investigation that must identify those responsible for any act of the use of chemical weapons.

Needless to say, it is essential that the Security Council ensures an independent, impartial, complete, conclusive and, above all, depoliticized investigation. We regret that the Security Council has as yet failed to achieve that objective. Nonetheless, we will support all work intended to accomplish that goal. It is crucial that the Council continue to discuss the issue of the use of chemical weapons, but I reiterate that what has brought us together at this meeting is the threat of one State Member' illegal use of force.

Over the past 72 years, humankind has built a framework that is not only physical or institutional, but also juridical. Humankind has setup instruments of international law intended precisely to prevent the most powerful from attacking the weakest with impunity so as to establish a balance in the world and prevent grave violations to international peace and security. We have built an international system — the Security Council is clear evidence of it — based on rules. It is the duty of the Council and of all the organs of the United Nations to respect those rules and defend multilateralism. The Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits unilateral action, must be upheld.

Another key detail to remember is that the Security Council is not representative of the five permanent members it comprises, nor of its 15 members seated around this table; rather, it represents the entire membership of 193 States, both the nations and their peoples. The Security Council must not be utilized as a sounding board for war propaganda nor interventionism. It should also not be made into a pawn to be sacrificed on the chessboard of war, geopolitics and petty interests.

We have heard many stories from history about the prohibition of chemical weapons, and Bolivia is an active participant in that system, but I would like to talk about the story of our Charter. When one is unsure about how to act under certain circumstances, I read that the best way to settle such uncertainty is to recall the principles of the French Revolution and reflect on where the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are upheld. Those principles form part of the genesis of the Charter. Another part comes from the Magna Carta, of course, which, for the first time in history, limited the exercise of power precisely to defend the weakest.

Another antecedent to the Charter is the Yalta Conference. I read that the Conference established the system of control and checks and balances, which is the Security Council with its five permanent members. Bolivia did not attend the Conference. As I understand it, just Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin were present. The outcome of the Conference was ratified at the San Francisco Conference a few months later in 1945. That is the system that we have agreed to uphold, which is why I believe that is essential to understand the principles of our Charter. Our Charter is not words on page, meant to hand out to tourists visiting the United Nations Headquarters, but rather a set of norms that we have agreed to comply with and uphold. Article 2 states that

> "The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles."

Principle 4 of Article 2 reads,

> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of

any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

That is to say that any use of force must be authorized by the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter. Any form of unilateral action therefore contravenes international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Another point worth mentioning is that we have listened, with due respect, to our colleagues speak about the criminal use of chemical weapons, and we completely agree with them on that. However, it would be very dangerous to fight an alleged violation of international law with another violation of international law and the Charter. That is why, in this specific case, we hope that there is an independent, impartial, comprehensive and conclusive investigation.

Allow me to offer a clarification to my dear colleague from the United Kingdom. While Bolivia voted against one draft resolution, it voted in favour of two others. It voted against the one because, regrettably, this platform was being exploited for political motives. Draft resolutions are presented for nothing more than the spectacle of it, for the television cameras. Draft resolutions are presented knowing that they will be vetoed, and not all efforts are put forth to reach consensus, though that is what we normally do for resolutions.

We believe that this meeting is very important because we not only discussing an attack on a Member State, or the threat of a military strike against a Member State of the United Nations, whichever it may be, but rather because we are living at a time of constant attacks on multilateralism. Let us recall that the achievements in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change have been undermined. Let us recall that the gains reached with the Global Compact for Migration have been eroded. Let us recall that there is a clear policy and mindset of multilateralism subversion. What happens is that for some the discourse on human rights is used until it no longer serves their interests, and then they violate those rights.

My region is a witness to that. We endured Operation Condor, as it was called, during the 1970s, which was planned by the intelligence services of some Member States. When democracy did not suit them, they financed coups d'etat. When they were unhappy with the discourse on human rights, they infringed human rights. When the discourse of democracy was no longer enough, they were ready to finance coups d'etat. The use of unilateral practices leaves behind unhealed wounds, despite the passage of time.

Some of the members of the Council have spoken on the situation in Iraq and Libya, which I believe are some of the worst crimes that have been committed this century. The invasion of Iraq, with its dire consequences, left more than 1 million dead. The effects of the strikes against Libya and the regime-change policies imposed on it, which, as my colleague from Equatorial Guinea aptly said, they still feel, suffer and endure throughout the entire region of the Sahel and Central Africa. But no one wants to talk about the root causes of those conflicts, and no one will talk about the impunity enjoyed for those serious crimes. It warrants repeating. Those are the most serious crimes committed this century. We hope that all the members of the Security Council, given the high degree of responsibility we have — 10 of us elected by the membership and five enjoy the privilege to have a permanent seat on the Council with the power of veto — must lead by example for the rest of the membership on the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter.

By way of conclusion, I would like to reiterate what former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a similar situation in 2013: "The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". That is my appeal. Everything must be addressed within the framework of the Charter. The use of force is legal only in the exercise of the right to self-defence, in line with Article 51 of the Charter, or when the Security Council approves such action. That was the reason for the meeting, and Bolivia's position is to categorically condemn any threat or use of unilateral force.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would very much like to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing today. We share his concern about the fact that the Middle East is experiencing crises and challenges that unquestionably represent threats to international peace and security. The situation will undoubtedly deteriorate if the Security Council resolutions are not implemented by the relevant parties.

The question of Palestine, the practices of the Israeli occupation there and its continued violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the relevant Security Council resolutions

are testament to that. The most recent is its repression of peaceful protests in Gaza and the use of excessive force. That led to the deaths of dozens of civilians and injuries to hundreds as they exercised their legitimate right to demonstrate peacefully in support of the March of Return. Kuwait condemns those Israeli practices in the strongest terms. We regret that the Security Council has not taken action to condemn such acts of repression or to call on the Israeli occupation forces to end them. The Israeli occupying Power should not be an exception. Everyone should respect and abide by international law and the Charter of the United Nations and should implement the relevant Security Council resolutions with the aim of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that can fulfil the Palestinian people's legitimate political right to establish their own State on their own land, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We have had a number of meetings over the past few days. Today's meeting would not have taken place if we had been able to agree on a new mechanism to investigate the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This disagreement has led to deep divisions among the members of the Security Council. We must step up our efforts to advance the stalled political process in Syria. We have been concerned about escalating tensions among all parties since the beginning of the year. Through the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), which primarily calls for a cessation of hostilities throughout Syria for at least 30 days, we tried to improve the humanitarian situation. Unfortunately, however, it has not been implemented and has in fact been violated in flagrant disregard for the will of the international community.

We share the concern and disappointment of the Secretary-General about the deteriorating situation in Syria and the ongoing allegations of the use of chemical weapons, and support his call for an agreement on a new mechanism to ensure accountability and end impunity in Syria. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to establish the facts surrounding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, in eastern Ghouta, and emphasize that there must be accountability for the perpetrators of those crimes, if they are confirmed.

In view of our responsibility as members of the Council, we should do our utmost and not lose hope, and we should continue our efforts to agree on the establishment of an independent, impartial and professional mechanism for attributing responsibility and ensuring accountability. The continued violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2118 (2013), by the warring parties in Syria further convince us that, in the case of grave violations of human rights or crimes that amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity, there should be a moratorium on the use of the veto as a procedural matter, so that such tragedies for innocent civilians are not repeated.

The State of Kuwait takes a principled and firm position, in line with that of the League of Arab States. We call for preserving the unity, sovereignty and independence of Syria, as well as for a cessation of the violence and hostilities in order to put an end to bloodshed, protect the Syrian people and achieve a peaceful settlement. This would be done under the auspices of the United Nations and through the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Syria, based on the Geneva communiqué of 2012 (S/2012/522, annex) and resolution 2254 (2015), with the aim of achieving a political transition agreed on by all sectors of Syrian society and of meeting their legitimate aspirations.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We join others in expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing and personal presence at today's meeting. In our view, since his appointment as steward of this world Organization, he has ceaselessly promoted a very important approach, which is the use of amicable and preventive diplomacy.

Following an alert to the world, the Security Council underlined in its first presidential statement of 2018, on preventive diplomacy and sustaining peace (S/PRST/2018/1), adopted during Kazakhstan's presidency of the Security Council, that the ways to address conflict may include measures to rebuild trust by bringing Member States together around common goals. That has been particularly important in situations where international relations have featured confrontations and tension behind which the contours of a global war are increasingly apparent. We are right now in a moment when we must exercise special caution and vigilance in making decisions about our actions, especially in the Middle East. We believe that it is time to tap into all the tools available for a comprehensive strategy of preventive diplomacy in order to avoid the very serious consequences of any

military action that could have repercussions for global security and stability.

The recent escalation of the rhetoric on Syria and the threat of the use of unilateral actions has left the delegation of Kazakhstan deeply concerned about the unfolding situation, which has the potential to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. We all bear a responsibility for complying with international law and order, and none of our countries has the right to violate the Charter of the United Nations or to act or threaten to act unilaterally with respect to a sovereign nation under any pretext, unless that is decided by the Security Council. The Security Council is a collective body and is designed to take balanced decisions with regard to the issues of peace and security. We can agree or disagree, but we are mandated to work together to achieve a decision for which we have to bear a collective responsibility.

Kazakhstan believes that the most effective way to prevent conflicts is to use diplomacy and mediation, not military means. We look forward to the next round of talks to be held in Geneva and in our capital, Astana, when the parties will address the stepping up of efforts to ensure observance of their respective agreements, among other issues.

In addressing the disputes over the issue of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma in Syria, which has provoked the most recent tension in international relations, we consider it necessary to state the following. Kazakhstan strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons, if confirmed. Impunity is not permissible. We should act resolutely to stop any further use of such inhuman weapons, but we should act on the basis of proven facts. In this particular case, where there are doubts about the actual use of a poisonous substance, Kazakhstan calls on the members of the Council to be patient, at least until the expert group of the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to Syria is deployed to the site of the alleged attack and can report on the findings of its investigation, particularly given that yesterday we learned that the Syrian Government has granted visas for the OPCW investigators and pledged to facilitate access to the sites of the alleged chemical attack. We should first establish and understand the scientifically and professionally ascertained facts, after which the Council should decide on the appropriate line of action to take.

At this stage, any military action or threat of it without the prior approval of the Security Council is undesirable. It could have a long-lasting negative impact that would be very difficult to overcome and could result in unprecedented and unanticipated complications. Kazakhstan remains committed to the Charter of the United Nations and to all Security Council resolutions aimed at resolving the political and humanitarian aspects of the Syrian conflict. We believe it is crucial to exercise restraint and refrain from any rhetoric that might exacerbate the already fragile and volatile situation. Such a pause for reflection on the consequences is essential to preserving international peace and security.

In the light of the prevailing circumstances, it is more critical than ever that all Council members implement resolution 2401 (2018). The crisis in Syria can be resolved only through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex), subsequent Security Council resolutions and the relevant statements of the International Syria Support Group. Lastly, we fully endorse the views articulated by the Secretary-General on 11 April about the risks of the current impasse that we are witnessing today (see SG/SM/18984). We must at all costs avoid the situation spiralling out of control. Our ultimate goal should be to put an end to the horrific suffering of the Syrian people and to help them to move forward on a path of peace and progress.

Once again, this is an alarming moment, and we need to work together to restore unity and effectiveness in the Security Council by rebuilding trust and consensus in order to preserve global peace and security. We need cooperation within the Council to establish a workable attribution mechanism, which we passionately advocated today in this Chamber. Let us make it happen and transform our words into real deeds. The delegation of Kazakhstan is ready for that and calls on its colleagues to go the extra mile in that direction.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and deeply appreciate his efforts to weigh in on the grave challenge that we are facing, in order to ensure that what should and must be avoided will not happen because of miscalculation or a lack of thoughtfulness or of appreciation for the tremendous responsibility that the Security Council, especially its permanent members, bears. The Cold War is back with a vengeance, the Secretary-General said, but this time, he went on to tell us, in a less managed

manner. It is difficult to quarrel with him. His approach was quite comprehensive, focusing, as he said, on the multiplicity of dangerous conflicts that the Middle East is facing. While his approach may be better, I choose to focus on Syria because it is the current flashpoint.

Following the alleged chemical attacks in Douma, it is regrettable that the Council was not able to adopt a resolution to create an independent, impartial and professional investigative mechanism for identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This is a problem that has been with us for some time and a reality that sadly reflects the lack of unity in the Council even on matters that are manifestly in the common interest of all. We certainly welcome the deployment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission to Syria to establish the facts surrounding the alleged use of chemicals as weapons. We have repeatedly stated that using chemicals as weapons is inhumane, and we condemn their use by any actor under any circumstances. One matter remains, and that is establishing a mechanism for attribution. We hope that will be done as soon as possible, but that does not mean that in the meantime we should cease to exercise maximum restraint in the interests of peace.

Right now, pragmatic considerations and simple rational calculation suggest that we must get our priorities right. We need to continue to live if we are to be able to fight evil. We have continued to express our deep concern about the current dynamics in Syria and their devastating implications for regional and international peace and security. We fully concur with the Secretary-General, who stressed in his statement of 11 April that it is vital to ensure that the situation does not spiral out of control (see SG/SM/18984). He stressed that legitimate concern again today. The Security Council, as the principal body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, should not and cannot allow that to happen. At a time when we are talking about preventive diplomacy — as well as after appointing a Secretary-General who told us, in his maiden speech to the Council (see S/PV.7857), that prevention is not merely a priority, but the priority — now is the time for the United Nations to undertake the search for diplomacy for peace in earnest. If we are seriously committed to moving our Organization from a culture of reaction to one of prevention, now is the time to stand firm, speak with one voice and take proactive and collective action that can be respected by all major stakeholders.

That requires the Council to be united for global peace and security. We know that is difficult, but we believe that we have no other sane option. This is the time for the Security Council to stand up and be counted. The Security Council is the custodian of the Charter of the United Nations, which, growing out of the devastation of the Second World War, promised to save succeeding generations from that scourge. That is a clarion call the Council should heed and act on. The situation should not be allowed to spiral out of control. The Secretary-General is right and the Council should listen to him.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and insightful briefing. His statement rightly focused on the broader Middle East. However, I will focus on the most pressing issue at hand, the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The Charter of the United Nations starts with the words "We the peoples of the United Nations", and while the Russian Federation is blocking the Council from taking effective action on the crimes of Russia's ally Syria, all peoples of every nation are outraged by the continued unrestrained violence that the Syrian regime has unleashed against its own people. As the Secretary-General just said, the people of Syria have lived through a litany of horrors. No responsible Government can ignore the universal outrage that those horrors have provoked.

Our collective incapacity in the Council to stop the crimes in Syria should weigh heavily on the conscience of all our members, but on the conscience of one permanent member in particular. It was our collective conscience that created the Charter of the United Nations. It was our collective conscience that created the Chemical Weapons Convention. The use of chemical weapons is unlawful in and of itself. It is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It is a serious violation of international law and may constitute a war crime and a crime against humanity.

We strongly believe that the international community must fully uphold the standard that the use of chemical weapons is never permissible. As the Secretary-General just said, the norm against the use of chemical weapons must be upheld. The non-proliferation regime must be upheld. Accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria is therefore neither optional

nor negotiable. The images of last weekend's attack in Douma are appalling. Atrocities have once again been inflicted on Syria's civilian population. Once again, dozens of innocent civilians have been killed and hundreds injured. The Kingdom of the Netherlands believes that it is highly likely that the Syrian regime is responsible for the attack. It has a proven history of such attacks, having used chemicals as a weapon against its own people in 2014, 2015 and 2017. It is unacceptable that four years after Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, its declarations can still not be verified as accurate or complete.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a long-time supporter of fighting impunity when it comes to chemical weapons. Regrettably, all attempts to achieve accountability in the Council have failed. Referral to the International Criminal Court was vetoed. The renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was also vetoed. This week, accountability was again vetoed. With its vetoes, the Russian Federation has assumed much responsibility for the crimes committed by the Syrian regime. The draft resolution for a new accountability mechanism that was vetoed this week remains the bare minimum of what is acceptable to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We will not settle for anything less than an independent, impartial attribution mechanism that can ensure that the culprits of that vicious attack will be identified and held accountable.

No veto can wipe from our memory the clear findings presented by the JIM on the use of chemical weapons by the Al-Assad regime and Da'esh. No veto can stop our compassion for the victims of the chemical-weapon attack last weekend. No veto can end our determination to achieve justice for the victims and for the people of Syria as a whole.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands remains committed to fighting impunity. We reiterate our strong support for an international, impartial and independent mechanism, the Commission of Inquiry, the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and a referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, as the most appropriate path to accountability and justice. At the heart of our policy on Syria is a deep desire for peace and justice for its people. Impunity cannot and will not prevail.

Let me end with warm words of appreciation to the Secretary-General and his tireless efforts for justice and the international legal order.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing and to assure him of our full support in finding a political solution to all conflicts, not just the one in Syria.

Since we are discussing the situation in the Middle East and in particular the current situation in Syria, let me begin with a very sad observation. Even with our unanimously adopted resolutions, such as resolution 2401 (2018), we are still not seeing any substantial change on the ground. The fighting is far from being over and the human suffering is tremendous. Taking into consideration the current situation and the growing risk of the loss of human life owing simply to a lack of food or medicine, we should try to do our utmost to find possible ways to ensure that life-saving aid convoys can reach those in need. Unfortunately, that applies not only to eastern Ghouta but also to Idlib and Aleppo provinces. We must find a way to alleviate the suffering of ordinary Syrians. The civilian population in Syria has already suffered too much.

International public opinion is watching our meetings and sees our lack of agreement on the most basic principles under international humanitarian law. The Council bears enormous responsibility and will be held accountable for its actions. We therefore call on the Council to take the necessary steps to ensure that all the parties to the conflict, especially the regime and its allies, implement the ceasefire, enable humanitarian access and medical evacuations and fully engage in the United Nations-led talks in Geneva, in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), which represent the best path to peace.

With regard to the issue of chemical weapons, a century ago that was a normal way to wage war. Just recently we commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the first use of chemical weapons, on the Western and Eastern fronts of the First World War alike. French, British, American and other Allied soldiers were targeted with chlorine in Ypres, while Russian soldiers were dying from the same gruesome weapons in Bolimów, now part of Polish territory. Now, a century later, we are being challenged by these ghastly weapons yet again. Our nations are seeing the effects of the same

toxic gas through the images of civilians who sought refuge in basements in Ghouta and other areas in Syria.

Chemical weapons were banned when the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) cam into effect in 1997. We had begun a new chapter in the history of non-proliferation and disarmament. All of us in this Chamber agree that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere is deplorable and unacceptable. Can we really allow the success story of the CWC to be reversed? Will the Security Council allow the vision of a world free of chemical weapons to be destroyed? It is regrettable that the establishment of an independent, impartial investigative mechanism on the use of chemical weapons in Syria was vetoed on Tuesday (see S/PV.8228), thereby enabling those responsible for chemical attacks to remain unpunished. Accountability for such acts is a requirement under international law and is central to achieving durable peace in Syria. As members of the Security Council, we must find a way to reach agreement on how to properly respond to chemical attacks in Syria. We hope to see the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) deployed to Douma as soon as possible. We reiterate our appreciation to the Director-General and staff of the OPCW for their commitment to its goals and work, often in particularly challenging circumstances.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire thanks Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing on new developments in the critical situation in several countries in the Middle East, in particular Syria, since the Security Council considered the issue on 9 and 10 April *(see S/PV. 8225 and S/PV. 8228)*.

Despite the relative lull in the fighting in Syria, the humanitarian situation remains troubling in the light of the allegations of the recurring use of chemical weapons by parties to the conflict. As a result of its internal divisions, despite our goodwill, the Council has failed to ensure the implementation of resolution 2401 (2018), which we adopted unanimously in order to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need. In the light of the continuing reports of the use of chemical weapons in Douma, the Council was unable to reach an agreement on a statement that at the very least would have conveyed our solidarity to the Syrian people at this difficult time. The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire remains concerned by the current impasse in the Security Council, which has, unfortunately, prevented it from reaching agreement on a mechanism to combat impunity vis-à-vis the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

In this context, we reiterate our support for the impartial, transparent, independent investigation to be conducted by the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with the aim of shedding light on allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Douma, in eastern Ghouta.

Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its strong condemnation of any use of chemical weapons, by any party, during peacetime or during wartime. Once again we beseech members of the Council to unite so as to set aside their differences and successfully set up an accountability mechanism to ensure that those who use chemical weapons are held accountable.

We remain alarmed by the tensions stemming from the current political impasse, and we encourage the Secretary-General to make use of his good offices with stakeholders to restore peace and calm, in order to prevent any further escalation of the situation. To that end, my country invites all parties to exercise restraint so as to peacefully resolve this issue and in so doing safeguard international peace and security, which is our shared legacy.

Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms our conviction and our principled position that there can be no military response to the crisis in Syria. The solution needs to be sought through dialogue and an inclusive political process, as stipulated in the road map set out by resolution 2254 (2015). My country remains convinced that dialogue alone will lead us to an equitable settlement of the conflict in Syria.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

We would like to express our gratitude for the briefing by Secretary-General António Guterres and to thank him for his willingness to help to achieve a solution to the impasse in which the Security Council currently finds itself. We encourage him to continue to spare no effort in this respect, in line with the prerogatives conferred upon him by the Charter of the United Nations.

Peru expresses its deep-rooted concern at the divisions that have emerged in the Council, in particular between its permanent members, and at the regrettable use of the veto, which limits our capacity to maintain

international peace and security and to resolve the humanitarian conflicts and crises that form our agenda.

We note with alarm the fact that the conflict in Syria continues to involve atrocity crimes committed with impunity and that it has deteriorated into a serious threat to regional and global stability, to the point where it is giving rise to serious tensions.

With respect to reports of the further use of chemical weapons in Douma, we believe it necessary to resume, as a matter of urgency and in a renewed spirit of compromise, negotiations that will lead to ensuring full access, as required, for the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is being deployed in Syria to determine what happened; and to create a dedicated, independent, objective and impartial mechanism to attribute responsibility.

On that understanding, we believe it important to recall once again that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and that any response to the barbaric events taking place in that country must be in keeping with the norms of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

We recall also that in its resolution 2401 (2018), the Council ordered a humanitarian ceasefire throughout the entire Syrian territory, and that it is urgent to make headway in the political process in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

As the Secretary-General himself said, of particular concern is the potential threat posed by the current deadlock. We must at all costs prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. This must not occur given that our duty is to put an end to the suffering of millions of people and to impunity for atrocity crimes.

Peru reiterates its commitment to living up to the lofty responsibility that the maintenance of international peace and security entails. My delegation will continue to work towards a solution to the conflict and protect the Syrian people, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would like to recall the statement by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2017/507, on the length of interventions.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like, on behalf of my Government, to express our condolences to the people and the Government of Algeria in connection with the tragic military plane crash that claimed the lives of 247 passengers.

Secondly, I welcome the participation of the Secretary-General in this very important meeting. I thank him for his comprehensive and accurate briefing, which made clear that he and others in the Council did in fact understand this meeting's agenda item. He spoke in a manner commensurate with the threats to international peace and security posed by the allegations and accusations against my country and its allies.

My colleague the Ambassador of Sweden said that the use of chemical weapons is a war crime. This is true. I agree with him, as does my Government. However, I would ask him whether he believes that war in itself is a crime and needs to be stopped and prevented. Perhaps this would be a very good title for a book by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and perhaps this would make clear to Member States that war in itself is a crime.

My colleague the representative of the United States said that the Syrian chemical weapons that killed civilians had been used 50 times; that is what she said. Chemical weapons were used 50 times and killed 200 civilians. Imagine that — the Syrian Government reversed the course of the global terrorist war against my country by killing only 200 civilians after having used chemical weapons 50 times. Are these not the words of amateurs? This is a scenario for DC Comics' *Superman* series. Is that how the White House strategists think — that a certain Government has used chemical weapons 50 times to kill 200 civilians? How is that logical?

My American colleague overlooked one important detail — that her country, on board the *MV Cape Ray*, destroyed the Syrian chemical stockpiles in the Mediterranean, along with ships from Denmark and Norway. How could it be that the experts in the United States delegation did not tell her that Ms. Sigrid Kaag told the Security Council in June 2014 that there were no more chemical stockpiles in Syria. Could they have simply forgotten all of that?

Some believe that the massive western military forces in the eastern Mediterranean are due to a Sufi Western affection for a handful of terrorist yobs in

Douma. By the way, those yobs were chased out to the North, as the Council is aware. They are now on their way to Saudi Arabia and thence to Yemen. They will be recycled and used on other fronts, including Yemen. No, the massive military forces in the Mediterranean do not target that handful of terrorists. They target the State of Syria and its allies. That should be the topic discussed today in this meeting.

My colleague the American Ambassador was not horrified that her country used 20 million gallons of Agent Orange in Viet Nam in 1961, killing and injuring 3 million Vietnamese. Four hundred thousand children are born with deformities every year due to the use of Agent Orange at that time. She was not horrified by her country's forces killing thousands of Syrians in Raqqa and thousands of Iraqis in Fallujah and Mosul through the use of white phosphorus, which is a chemical weapon. I ask my colleague, the Ambassador of Sweden: Is that not a war crime?

I would like to read a remark of the former Defence Minister of Britain, Mr. Doug Henderson. He spoke of the use by his country and the United States of white phosphorus in Iraq. I would ask my friend the British Ambassador to listen to this. Mr. Henderson said that it was unbelievable that the United Kingdom would occupy a country — meaning Iraq — to look for chemical weapons and at the same time use chemical weapons against that very same country.

George Orwell, the well-respected and ethical Western author said: "In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act". The truth that needs to be told today is that three permanent members of the Security Council are dragging the entire world once again towards the abyss of war and aggression. They seek to obstruct the Council's work in maintaining international peace and security, which is the main principle agreed upon and endorsed by our founding fathers when they adopted the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco on 26 June, 1945. Even though my colleague, the Ambassador of Bolivia has already read it out, I would like to once again remind the Council of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter:

> "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations".

The truth that needs to be told today is that those three States have a legacy based on fallacies and fabricated narratives in order to launch wars, occupy States, control their resources and change their governing systems. The truth that needs to be told today is that the entire world and the Council stand witnesses to the invasion, occupation and destruction of Iraq based on a United States lie in this very Chamber 14 years ago. They stand witnesses to France's exploitation of the Council to destroy Libya under the pretext of protecting civilians while ending the future of an entire people for the very simple reason that its President at the time, Mr. Sarkozy, wanted a cover up for his financial corruption. This is an ongoing case, of which members are all aware. However, some countries still fall for those lies promoted by those very same States in order to attack my country, Syria.

God bless the days when France the policies of Charles de Gaulle in the Council followed and repudiated the aggression of the United States and Britain against Iraq. We yearn for those days. France no longer respects the policies of Charles de Gaulle and is now one of the countries that launch attacks against other countries.

The truth that needs to be told today is that the international community has not sought to rein in those who are reckless and undermine international relations, subjecting them to disaster time and again since the establishment of this international Organization. Our biggest fear is that if the international community does not come together to end the abuse of those who are reckless, then the Organization will die in circumstances very similar to that which led to the death of the League of Nations.

The truth that needs to be told today is that after the failure of the United States, Britain, France and their proxies in our region to achieve their objectives in Syria through providing all forms of support to the armed terrorist groups, we see them today tweeting and bragging about their nice, new and smart rockets, and defying international legitimacy from the Council Chamber. They dispatch war planes and fleets to achieve what their terrorists have failed to achieve over the past seven years.

The truth that needs to be told today is that the Syrian Government liberated hundreds of thousands of civilians in eastern Ghouta from the practices of armed terrorist groups that used them as human shields, held

them hostage for years and prevented any medical or food assistance from reaching them. The terrorist groups used the schools, homes and hospitals of those civilians as military bases to launch attacks on 8 million civilians in Damascus.

The truth that needs to be told today is that some reckless people are pushing international relations towards the abyss based on a fake video prepared by the terrorist White Helmets, pursuant to instructions by Western intelligence.

The truth that needs to be told today is that the so-called international alliance used its war planes to serve Da'esh in order to block the victory of the Syrian Arab Army and its allies against that terrorist organization. That international alliance made the White Helmets its media division to fabricate and falsify incidents in order to benefit the Al-Qaida terrorist organization.

The government of my country took the initiative to invite the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to dispatch its Fact-finding Mission to visit Syria and the alleged site of the incident in Douma. The Government of my country has provided all the facilitation needed for the team to work in a transparent and accurate manner. The team is supposed to start its work in a few hours. This invitation was issued out of strength, confidence and diplomatic experience, not because we are weak or afraid and giving in to bullying or threats.

The Syrian Arab Republic condemns in the strongest terms the Governments of these three States for launching their threats to use power in a flagrant violation of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which identifies the primary purpose of the United Nations as the maintenance of international peace and security and the suppression of acts of aggression and other breaches to peace.

With the exception of the United States, Britain and France, we all understand that the Security Council is the organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security and should stand against attempts to impose the law of the jungle and the rule of the powerful. However, some Member States think that the United Nations is just a private business company that works on the basis of pecuniary interests, market rules and the principle of supply and demand to determine the fate of peoples and States, and that use it as a platform for cheap theatrics and the dissemination of lies. This is the truth that disappoints the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world.

I am not reinventing the wheel in this Chamber. The history of our relations with those States is filled with agony, pain and bitterness as a result of their very well-known policies of aggression. Another more important and shocking truth that should be told today is that the silence of the majority with respect to those aggressive policies does not constitute collusion with these States, but it does arise from fear of their arrogance and political blackmail, economic pressure and aggressive record. Those States do not blink when they go after anyone who is telling the truth.

In conclusion, if those three States — the United States, Britain and France — think they can attack us and undermine our sovereignty and set out to do so, we would have no other choice but to apply Article 51 of the Charter, which gives us the legitimate right to defend ourselves. This is not a threat the way they do; it is a promise. This is a promise. We will not let anyone attack our sovereignty.

Why do I say that this is a promise? I say this because a thought commonly ascribed to the great United States leader George Washington, who lived more than 200 years ago comes to mind — the sound that is louder than that of the cannons is the sound of the truth that emanates from the heart of a united nation that wants to live free. We in Syria also have leaders and prominent figures as great as George Washington. They are doing the same thing for Syria — protecting the unity and sovereignty of their country.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8232

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8232nd meeting

Friday, 13 April 2018, 12.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Melki
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Albanai
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Poland	Mr. Zawieja
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Nivaeus
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. French

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 12.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/341, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2411 (2018).

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.